FLOATING FANCIES AMONG THE WEIRD AND THE OCCULT

E. TENNYSON NEELY, PUBLISHER, NEW YORK & LONDON

FLOATING FANCIES

AMONG THE

WEIRD AND THE OCCULT.

BY

CLARA H. HOLMES.

F. TENNYSON NEELY,
PUBLISHER,
LONDON. NEW YORK.

Copyright, 1898,
by
CLARA H. HOLMES.

TO MY FRIEND,

WILLIAM MONTGOMERY.

20722378

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Nordhung Nordjansen	7
In the Beyond	29
The Tragedy of the Gnomes	51
An Unfair Exchange	97
Limitations	99
A Tale of Two Pictures	119
A Nineteenth Century Ghost	152
What Became of the Money?	169
His Friend	196
A Tale of the X-Ray	214
An Averted Tragedy	231

FLOATING FANCIES.

NORDHUNG NORDJANSEN.

VERY many years ago, in an age when departures from the regular line of thought were accounted but vagaries of a diseased brain, when science was a thing of dread, and great knowledge deemed but sorcery, Nordhung Nordjansen was born, and grew to early manhood on the far northern coast of Norway.

Through all his boyhood days—whenever he could steal away from his father and his father's plodding work—he would climb the bold crags which overlooked the Northern Sea, and gaze with hungry eyes over the vast expanse of water.

"If I could but know what lies beyond that cold horizon," he would sigh.

He expressed this longing to his father.

"Get your mother a bundle of fagots, and pry not into the unknown," answered his father, so sternly that Nordhung dared not mention it again, and being an obedient boy he went into the forest; but with every stick he gathered, he also gathered a doubt of his father's wisdom.

"How can it be wrong to wish to know what lies in that beautiful beyond?"

He gathered another stick or two, and idly twirling them in his hand, he murmured, "My father says it is a sin to pry into that which is hidden; perhaps it is not hidden, but just lies there waiting to be admired, as did our beautiful Norway, long, long ago."

He piled the sticks in a little heap, and sat beside them, idly throwing pebbles at a little bird which sat on a branch, and mocked his restlessness with happy song.

"I wish that I could know what lies beyond my sight. The sky has stooped down to meet the waves, and they are so glad that they leap and dimple in the sunlight. Oh, it must be very beautiful in that far country! Why must the longing for all things beautiful be a sin? It is no sin to work, to pick up fagots to make the pot boil, but I do not like to do this! My father says it is a sin to sit on the crags, and look across the sea, and wish and wish that I were a bird, so that I could fly; but I love to do that. I wonder why the sinful cannot be ugly, and those things which are right be beautiful and nice to do!"

Thus the battle went on in this mind, thirsty for knowledge; a battle as old as man himself, with his ignorance, and the prejudice of false teaching.

One day Nordhung climbed the boldest of the crags overlooking Tana Fiord, and gazed long and wistfully over the many islands which lay along the coast.

A stately ship sailed out of Sylte Fiord, and made its way around the headland to the open

sea. With fascinated gaze he watched it spread its white wings; the waves lapped and beat about its prow, it kept on its majestic way as though scorning their childish gambols. His heart swelled with eager desire; if he could but own that wonderful ship and sail away into the unknown! If he could but reach the home of the beautiful Aurora Borealis and search out its mysteries!

There sprang into life in that hour the firm resolve that some day he would know—that some day *he* would stand on the deck of a beautiful ship of his own, and proudly sail away into the pale glory of those northern skies, and discover the wonderful things lying beyond those opaline tints. Then the mist creeping up from the sea began to envelop him, and he cried aloud, thinking it a spirit sent to punish him for the sinfulness of his desires, and he ran home as fast as his legs could carry him.

. . . . . .

Fifteen years later Neiharden Nordjansen, father of Nordhung Nordjansen, died and was buried in the little churchyard; he was born, he breathed, he ate, he slept, he died and was buried with his ancestors; what more could man desire? Before the tears were dried upon his cheeks Nordhung remembered that he was free, and his heart throbbed with impatience. Three years more passed by; he stood upon the deck of an outgoing ship, his shoulders thrown back, his head erect; proudly conscious that he was commander. He bawled arrogantly to the sailors;

he cast his eyes over the great spread of canvas, set to catch ever little flurry of wind, and lifted his chin a trifle higher.

"Commander Nordjansen!" he murmured delightedly.

Away to the north-northeast he sailed. Threading his way carefully past the many rocky islands, he entered the frozen sea; ever in danger, trembling at the near approach of icebergs, or crouching awe-stricken in the shadow of their immensity, yet never did Nordhung forget that he was "Commander Nordjansen."

After long, weary months of sailing, when provisions ran low, when cold and hunger had pinched the sailors sorely, they openly grumbled at Nordjansen's rule; they wearied for home, for wives and sweethearts.

"Why seek further?" cried one; "we are already too far from home!"

"What do we seek?" said another bitterly.

"A fool's desire! The commander's Jack-o-lantern!" answered a third derisively.

But though they grumbled and cast many black looks, the tones were low and they were careful that they spoke behind his back.

Nordjansen paced his deck with fierce impatience; he strained his eyes for indication of that which he sought—the North Pole. The beautiful Aurora Borealis lighted his way with streaming flames of red, that quivered into golden glory, or faded into palest silver—only to flame, and shoot, and dart across the heavens again like fantastic, serpent tongues; he approached the beautiful wonder—it seemed to him not one jot

nearer than in the beginning of his journey. His heart lay heavy within him.

He surprised the fierce, scowling glances of his sailors, as by twos and threes they grumbled together. He sternly ordered them about their business; they grumbled still more as they obeyed.

His heart sank with dread; the chill wind blew through the frozen cordage, and whistling shrilly, mocked the lure of his lifetime. Was all his effort to end in failure; were all his hopes and lofty ambitions to yield no fruition? Was he never—never to fathom the secret of the Unknown and the Wonderful?

For hours he paced the deck; true, at his command the sailors had slunk away, but with scowls of bitter hate; each heart filled with wrath and grievous longing. Habit of obedience is strong, and Nordjansen was commander, as he was careful that they should remember.

In his pacing to and fro he passed the compass; he paused in astonishment, the needle was vibrating strangely, and he became conscious that the vessel was no longer going steadily on her course—although the water appeared smooth —but was pitching in short, sudden lurches; now slightly to the right, then to the left; quivering—quivering—like some frightened living thing.

Strange thrills ran through his body; a terble fear shook him.

The flames of the Aurora seemed to hang directly over the ship, and to be of a fiery hue, anon changing to all the prismatic colors of the

rainbow, so brilliant as to frighten him; a thousand fiery tongues seemed to lick at the reeling ship, as though to devour her, and all contained therein. He covered his eyes with his shaking hands to shade his tortured eyeballs from their satanic gambolings.

One by one the terrified sailors crept on deck and huddled together, talking in awed whispers, or crouched around the mast in abject fear. At last three, more bold—or more desperate—than the others, walked up to Nordjansen; one, a grizzled old fellow, pulled his tangled forelock awkwardly.

"What do you wish?" asked Nordjansen sternly.

"If you please, sir, me and my mates wants to know if so be as you'll turn back. We've naught to eat, and it's sore goin' without feed, when it's growin' cold—c-o-l-d-e-r e-v-e-r-y m-i-n-u-t-e," his teeth chattering so that he could scarcely speak.

"Go below! You cowards!" shouted Nordjansen fiercely. "Cold! You are frightened! No wonder your teeth chatter like the boughs of the trees in the winter wind!" he shrieked, hoarse with rage. They crept away, more affrighted of his wrath than of the cold or the fiery phenomenon over their heads.

Nordjansen drew himself up proudly:

"Let them not presume to dictate to me; *I* am the commander! But it *is* c-o-l-d; y-e-s, c-o-l-d;" his lips trembled, and *his* teeth chattered so that his speech halted.

The strange thrills increased in force, and shot through him in more rapid succession.

A wind had arisen, which each moment increased in velocity. Of a sudden the ship lurched wildly, then spun half around, and with an awful thud the iron sheathing of her bow adhered to the North Pole, as the cambric needle is attached to the magnet with which children play. One glimpse of icebergs so awful, so terrible in their magnitude; higher than the highest peaks of the Himalayas, numerous beyond computing; each one a perfect prism, lighted into a blinding radiance of color by the midnight sun. Nordjansen knew that he had found the home of the Aurora Borealis. He had scant time to notice these wonders; all that he saw in that fleeting glance made a horrible impression upon his awe-struck mind, yet no one thought was distinct or clearly defined—one awful throe of fear possessed him.

The wind had increased to a shrieking gale, and although the force of magnetism held the vessel sealed to the pole, it quivered, groaned, and strained for release like a living thing.

Nordjansen's knees trembled; he turned his terror-stricken gaze away from the awful illumination—the dizzy commingling of rays of every hue—from the vast, unnumbered prisms of ice; his eyeballs ached with the glare; which, though so brilliant, was permeated with a chill more terrible than the rigor of death.

As in affright he turned his eyes away it was but to encounter another horror; before him lay a cavernous entrance, glooming downward and forward, into the very bowels of the earth; he loosed his hold upon the mast—to which he had

been clinging for support—to wipe the cold drops of perspiration from his brow, brought there by terror. He wished his sailors were on deck that he might hear the sound of a human voice. He wished—he wished that he had been less harsh. When all is well we are filled with self-sufficiency, but when adversity comes upon us we crave human sympathy as much as does the little child who holds up a hurt hand for mother's healing kiss.

He had no sooner loosed his hold upon the mast than the strong wind lifted him bodily, and carried him—feet foremost—into the terrors of the abyss which swallowed him up in darkness. He had no time for thought as he was borne rapidly forward; swept along as a feather is borne on the autumn gale; he lay on his back, as the swimmer floats on the water, his arms pressed closely to his sides, his feet held stiffly together. The strange incongruous thought occurred to him: "This is the position in which I shall be placed when I am dead; my feet will lie thus, side by side; my hands should be crossed upon my breast—" he tried to raise his hands and so place them, but found that he had no power to stir them. "I wonder if I am dead! Is this the dread change? He laughed whimsically, for at this instant the strong wind, sweeping his hair backward, made his head itch; that was no *post-mortem* sensation.

A strange rumbling noise greeted his ears; the clank of ponderous machinery, the whirr of enormous belts, as the earth turned on her axis. The wind, which had been bitterly cold, grew

gradually warmer; a strange, dreamy lassitude stole over him, a wavy, half-light helped to soothe his senses.

On—on, he floated; how long he knew not; days—weeks—he had no idea as to time. A desperate hunger assailed him; he fancied that trees loaded with luscious fruits mocked him as he was swept by; odors strange but delightful seemed to fill his whole being with longing; his mouth dripped with moisture. Oh, how dreadful the onward sweeping! Would it never end?

All sound had died away—I should say—had been left behind; no more creaking and groaning of the horribly ponderous machinery; but a silence still more horrible reigned. We have little realization of what perfect silence would be. Our world is one vast hubbub. Who ever knew the day or night, the time or place, that we did not hear the rush of the wind among the treetops; the calls of birds; the lowing of cattle; the bark of a dog, or the blow of an ax; perhaps the crack of a whip? Noise, noise everywhere, and at all times. Were perfect silence to reign for one hour, the tones of the human voice would strike upon the ear with the force of a blow.

Nordhung must have swooned; how long he remained in this unconscious state he had no means of knowing; indeed, he felt that here time was not. As his faculties once more became active, he noticed, first, that he was being carried forward much more slowly; secondly, that instead of going straight ahead, he was describing an immense circle, with an occasional sharp

turn. He also observed that the wavering light had increased to a steady white glow, a brilliancy almost blindling to his unaccustomed eyes; faint sounds came to him from time to time, not like the ponderous noises which had affrighted him, but human sounds—laughter—a child's cry—but with something strange in the tone. His heart swelled rapturously! Was he nearing the earth's surface again? Oh, that he might once more sit on the crags of Norway, and look upon his beautiful land!

We are prone to consider that most beautiful which we looked upon while the heart was young; then, all the world was fair, and we loved much.

When disappointments have come to us, and hope has grown jaded, we look back, even upon a rocky desolation, and say in all sincerity, "How beautiful it was," not knowing that it was but our hearts' hopes that were beautiful. Alas, *that were!*

Nordhung sadly thought: "My father was right, and I am well punished for prying into the unknown."

Sounds became more distinctly audible; the wind had fallen to a gentle breeze, and he felt himself settling, settling as you have seen a balloon descend as the gas gradually escaped.

Gently he floated into the midst of an excited group, who scatttered with cries of fear and wonder. Strange sounds issued from these strange beings; tones of dismay, and astonishment, in which no one voice differed from another; a thin sound, lacking timbre; as the wind

blows with the angry force of the storm, or gently sighs of a placid summer day—so these voices were in anger high and shrill, in joy softly reaching the consciousness. Their bodies —if that could be called a body which possessed no substance—were as strange as their voices, being but a vapor surrounding the soul—the shadow of a form; each emotion, thought or impulse was therefore plainly discernible. Of speech there was no need, consequently there was none; all sound emitted was but that of spontaneity; laughter, cries of wonder, horror, and the like.

The shriek of amazement that greeted his ears; the strange appearance of the people; the weird surroundings so impressed Nordjansen that little, cold shivers chased each other down his spine. He saw their thought, their wonder and fear; as I have said, there was no need of language; each spirit saw, and perfectly comprehended the thought of the other; it was cause of amazement to these people that they could not see his thought—the working of his mind; this wonderful fact—much more than the mode of his advent, or of his presence—dominated each intelligence.

He raised upon his elbow, and watched their growing awe; presently, he saw this thought leap into one mind: It is a God!" Instantly half a dozen minds followed suit, the spark igniting the tinder as readily in these strange intelligences, as it does among us. He watched with fascinated curiosity the skepticism, the doubt,

the hesitation, changing to a slow growth of belief in the various understandings.

Above all his wonder, above all his curiosity—a minimum of awe, and much gratified vanity—one fact made itself felt; he was hungry, and he said so.

The panic was terrible! A multitudinous shriek answered him; no variation in sound, no distinction of voices—a single, horrible note of fear—and they flitted away—I cannot say walk, or run—for how can a vapor do either?—they floated away in affright.

He, seeing their dismayed thought, laughed; he arose to his feet, stretched his muscles; it seemed enjoyable to stand upright once more after lying inert for so long a time.

As he moved about another shriek arose; the sound held an element of the horrible in that one level, unvarying tone, and sent a fresh shiver adown his spine. Soon, however, curiosity overcame their fear, and one by one they timidly floated toward him; one, more courageous than the rest, came so close that the vapory body half-encircled him; a wonderfully pleasant sensation went through all his being; a moist warmth, which conveyed a sense of fellowship—a kinship of soul, pure and delightful.

One after another gained courage, and approached, until he was completely enveloped in the living mist. He saw the growing worship in every mind; that adoration of the mysterious, which ofttimes serves for a worship of the divine.

"It is well," thought Nordjansen, "Nordhung,

people always look up to you; these people recognize your superiority!"

Notwithstanding his satisfaction, and self-laudation, he did not forget that he was very hungry; he opened his mouth and pointed down his throat, and used his jaws as though masticulating; only bewilderment greeted his most eloquent pantomime. How could they understand? Being without body or substance they needed no food except that which entered each vapory environment by absorption. Then occurred a strange thing to Nordjansen; he cried out in anguish: "My God! Must I starve?"

He sighed; a long, deep inspiration, and was instantly conscious of a delicious sweetness in his mouth, a taste like a strange, but most luscious fruit. He repeated the indrawing process until he felt perfectly satisfied, without the unpleasantness which repletion gives.

He wandered around a space which seemed inclosed, to which he could find no limit; he had no conception of distance, perspective was lost in a bewildering unreality of all surroundings; for instance, Nordhung thought that he beheld a most beautiful tree, he desired a nearer view; he wandered on and on until exhausted before he realized that here, space, like time, had no known law; such being the case, if course, Nordjansen had no means of knowing how long he dwelt in this strange place.

All these fantastic beings, with one exception, worshiped him as a God sent among them for some great, but unknown purpose; he, seeing their awe and worship, took pains to foster and

increase it. To himself he said: "Nordhung, you are indeed great; these beings know it; they are fine creatures!" He lifted his shoulders a trifle more, and endeavored to assume a godlike tread.

The one exception of which I have spoken was a female; she worshiped him as a woman often does, when she should but love. She hovered around him by night and by day, she enveloped him, she would have permeated him; she watched his every act, she hung upon, and learned to interpret his looks; she suited herself to his moods, and her thoughts to his desires as nearly as she could divine them; in fact, she would have thought his thoughts could she have seen them as he saw hers.

He learned many things which to him were very strange; he found the source of the illumination of this place, a light that shone with steady radiance; not as our sun shines for a few hours which we call day, and kindly gives place to the darkness of night, that many may rest from toil, and a few may sneak into evil under cover of its shadow. The two poles, one entering from the north, the other from the south, here formed a positive and a negative; which, with the power engendered as the world turns on her axis, was made to produce an electric light of wonderful brilliancy. He also learned to communicate his desires to these beings with whom he mingled. Their amazement at his flesh, bone, sinews, hidden mind, in fact, his entire personality grew continually; they could not understand how such a condition could exist; *he* was to them a miracle, consequently to be worshiped.

Nordjansen grew to admire these souls, so perfectly pure; so free from all deceit, and truthful perforce; loving and faithful, as no taint of evil *could* find lodgment in their transparent minds.

Pure and sweet as they were, his heart at times grew sick for his own kind, and instead of the faint, moist, languorous atmosphere, with never a disturbing storm, he longed for the rocky promontories of his Norway; the reverberation of the rolling thunder among the hills, and the wild lashing of the sea on the rocky base of the cliffs. Sometimes he dreamed—half-awake, half-asleep—that the briny spray was dashing in his face, and thought that he could taste the pungent savor of the salt, and awoke to find the tears trickling down his cheek, moistening his tongue. His heart grew faint unto sickness for the light of the sun, and the shifting shadows of the clouds on the distant hills, where the grass grew like a flower-decked carpet, and the white sheep bleated lovingly to one another. And oh! for a sight of the stately, white-robed ships as they sailed away into the unknown which he now deplored. He numbedly wondered what had become of his good ship, Nord Rhyn.

Alas, that he had not been content with his father's land, and his father's homely ways!

He grew unutterably weary of the unreality of all things surrounding him, he longed for the interchange of day and night; he longed for food—actual food—with a throe of maddening pain, so keen was his desire; he longed for creatures of flesh and blood, with their inborn predilection for evil ,which gave the doing of right

things so much sweeter flavor. He wearied of the love of the She which so completely enveloped him, as men ever tire of that which is so wholly their own that they cannot for one fascinating hour escape it; it is worse than a diet of sweets, although the effect is the same, a nauseated surfeit.

She, poor soul! She learned to dread his scowling brow, his harsh tone; to shrink and tremble in wild affright whenever he ordered her away; she sought ever to win a more kindly regard by added devotion, by hanging more fondly and constantly about him. After all she differed not so greatly from her sisters on the face of the earth. He grew more intolerant of her presence, and violently ordered her to leave him; he noted her agony of fear, her deathless devotion, and her hopeless pain with indifference, as with a cry of despair she turned away.

He seized the opportunity and fled, whither he knew not; he could but die, which meant surcease from all the wild longings that so beset him. On, ever onward! How far! How long! Oh, it was terror not to know—to have no account of time—no knowledge of distance; it was like sailing a ship through eternal void, no landmarks —no limit—just on, and on—so far as he had knowledge of it.

Ah! A change came over him. The spirit of the explorer stirred once more within him. He felt that he was once again describing an immense circle, as had been his experience upon entering; he felt that there was a reason for this, and his mind became busy trying to solve the problem.

"There is some purpose in this; come to think of it, there is a purpose in most things, and I shall arrive at an understanding of this one," he murmured complacently.

His surroundings were visibly changing, distance seemed tangible, all things more real. A strange awesome stillness had fallen around him like a mantle of dread, and every instant seemed to deepen its intensity; the air, from being languorously balmy, had grown chill, and a strong current hurried him forward.

His perplexed mind began to grasp the solution which had evaded him; were it not for these many turnings, and the immensity of the circle, the cold draught from Pole to Pole would sweep through with all the devastating force of a cyclone. He stopped and straightened himself, bringing his hands together with a resounding thwack: "To be sure! Why, of course! Nordhung, I thought you would master the problem; there is very little that baffles you!" he cried approvingly.

His voice sounded horrible; it echoed, and reechoed like the laughter of a thousand demons; in wild affright he started to run, but stumbled and fell; a groan was wrung from his lips as he tried to rise; he thought he heard a soft sigh, and a moist, warm vapor swept his bruised cheek like a tender, clinging kiss. He stumbled to his feet regardless of his wounds, and screamed out, as he struck furiously into the darkness: "Go back; go to your own kind; I hate you!" he screamed, crazed with rage and his fear of restraint, and as he was—as purely animal fear

ever is—brutal. A single, sad note answered him; sad as the wail of the autumn wind when the last leaf floats down to earth; sad as the cry of the Soul which—seeing Heaven's wide open gate—must still pass by on the other side; as sad—oh, saddest of all, as when all love's hopes lie slain by one's best beloved. Adieu! adieu!

His hand was again lifted to strike, and—"Ah!" he caught his breath in a sharp gasp; a gust of wind lifted him off his feet, precisely as in entering, forcing his hands close to his sides, feet pressed together—toes up—like the feet of the dead. Swift, swifter he sped; all thought, all feeling lost in that mad rush; a vague consciousness alone remained to him. It seemed that for ages he was borne along, then into his dim consciousness entered the same rumbling sounds; heavy, jarring, indistinguishable noises; cold, colder grew the atmosphere, the wind pierced to the marrow of his bones; his very vitals seemed freezing. Happily he lost consciousness.

For many days a wild storm swept the far southern sea, and a half-dozen sailors, with their small boat, were thrown upon a rocky point which was continually lashed by the icy waves; there they found a gaunt, white-haired old man, who sobbed at sight of them. When, after weeks of suffering from cold and hunger, they again put to sea in their small boat, they took the old man with them.

After many days of suffering—days which were like a horrible dream of cloudless sky and

lapping water, with never a drop to quench their thirst; a of ball of fire by day, which yet gave no grateful warmth, and a maddening calm of moon at night; a nightmare of wandering thoughts, and gibbering tongues, amid which the face of Nordjansen looked like a fabled Gorgon, with eyes of restless fire—after many days of this inexpressible horror they were taken on board a ship bound for the East Indies.

Nordjansen had crouched down by a coil of rope, his long gray beard hung in matted strings, his scant white hair tossed wildly in the breeze. A seaman, attending to his duty, stumbled over a loose end of the rope and came near falling; he gave vent to an impatient exclamation in his native tongue—Norwegian. No matter how fluently one speaks a foreign language, in moments of emotion the tongue falls naturally into its national speech.

Nordjansen sprang to his feet, his eyes glowing wildly; his words came tumbling over each other in voluble incoherency; he clasped his compatriot's knees and kissed the hands that would have pushed him away; the fiery light died out of his eyes,leaving them sad and pathetic; at last the man understood, and lifting him to his feet said kindly:

"Tell me what you wish?"

"I want to go to my Norway! I wish for my friends! I am weary of strange lands, and stranger things! I long for the land of my birth, and would once more hear our beloved language spoken by all!" he poured forth volubly.

"Yes, yes!" answered his friend soothingly, as he hurried away.

Nordjansen's eyes followed him hungrily, and from that time he watched the leaping waves with glad delight as he stood for hours at the prow of the boat.

"Fly! Begone! Away with you, that the more speedily I may see my beloved land," he would cry with all the happy abandon of childhood.

He waylaid Varman, and plied him with endless questions until the man took every means of keeping out of his sight.

Day followed day in sickening monotony, until Nordjansen laid his aching head upon his coil of rope and wept in weariness of heart.

"I shall never see my land again; Varman is deceiving me. I wish that I had been less unkind to She; I should know *her* thought; *She* would not deceive me!"

He was so soon regretting that which he had cast side so carelessly, forgetful that dead love knows no resurrection; neither can the divine passion be put on or off as easily as we can reconsider our decison as to cast-off garments.

Thus he fretted until the hours were as days, and the days interminable; when they hailed a passing ship, and he was tranferred to the homeward-bound vessel, and thus at last he reached the haven of his desire—Norway.

As his old feet tottered through the streets of his native place, all things looked sad and strange; he looked piteously around, seeking a familiar countenance, and when he found not

one, he hid his face in his shaking hands and wept aloud.

Little children hid in their mothers' gowns, and the old people shook their heads stolidly when he asked in trembling tones if they knew his old-time friends, and they replied, in accents of wonder:

"We know them not; we heard never the names."

He asked but one more question: "Did you know my beautiful ship, the Nord Rhyn, and her goodly crew? I was her commander!" with a sad attempt at his old air of pride.

"No, no! We never heard of such a ship," they answered impatiently. He sighed deeply and sadly, as he turned away, and climbed to the summit of the crags his memory held so dear.

At last he stood on the rocky height and looked around with saddened eyes; it seemed as though the sun shone less bright, and that the hills had grown bald and ugly; and as he looked toward the north which had so fascinated him in the long ago, it appeared cold and forbidding. He sank down forlornly, and with hand closed over his dim eyes he watched ever the white-clad ships sailing past, and eagerly peered at each to learn her name.

"The Nord Rhyn will soon come into port; my sailors must have heard of their commander's return; they will know, and welcome me," he would repeat again and again, persistently clinging to this last hope.

At times when the autumn winds sighed he

would start up tremulously; "It is *She!* I hear her voice! I wish that she would come!" He sighed sorrowfully for the jewel which he had thrown away.

One sweet spring morn found him, still with that quietude which ends all weariness; he had found rest on the highest crag overlooking Tana Fiord, on the same spot where he had sat and wished with restless heart in his boyhood days. A sweet moisture rested on his cheek, a happy smile touched his lips and the careworn wrinkles had smoothed away from his brow. Perhaps She had known his sad longing, and with love's tender forgiving had answered his call in that last hour; the hour in which with clearer vision and unselfish thought he stood on the threshold of the higher plane.

With kindly hands the simple people laid him away, afraid to neglect or despise one of "God's Children," as they called those of unbalanced mind; and as they passed around the open grave, each cast in a flower and whispered pityingly: "God receive the poor old lunatic!"

IN THE BEYOND.

THE summer sun beat oppressively down upon the heads of August Blair and Aimee Herne, as they walked their horses slowly down the hilly road. Aimee took off her hat and fanned her heated face: "Mercy! the lower regions can't be much hotter than this!"

August laughed as he flicked at the overhanging branches of the trees with his whip: "According to all accounts there isn't very much shade there."

"Just at present I could imagine only a mitigation of heat and a perpetual breeze, as fitly belonging to that plane of existence," replied Aimee, in that light tone which either means nothing or hits the truth without positive conception of its being such.

"That speech embodies every person's idea of heaven, doesn't it? We wish most earnestly for the condition we find lacking to our comfort in this world; thus, to-day a cool wind and shade seem most desirable; next week it might be quite different——"

"A fire for instance," said Aimee sarcastically.

"That is another of man's ideas constructed from the purely material, and grafted into the spiritual tree; burning by fire is man's concep-

tion of the worst possible torment. Our ideas of the hereafter—and incidentally of heaven—are very vague and uncertain; no mind can build higher than its purest ideal, and our knowledge gained only from the material world cannot grasp the spiritual. We speculate a little, and take a flight in this or that direction; but like a bird at night—bewildered by the arc lights in the street we fall back to earth—and material things for all our types of happiness."

Aimee threw up her hand impatiently, "Oh, what ideas! I don't want to talk about such things; I prefer thinking how pleasant it is under this great old oak. Let us rest here, August."

"All right," he answered as he alighted and assisted her from the saddle. They seated themselves on a grassy knoll at the foot of the tree, and restfully watched the horses crop the short, sweet grass.

August's thought seemed to persistently linger on the subject of the beyond: "There could be nothing more heavenly than this—were one's mind but in perfect accord with one's surroundings," said he.

"Which very seldom happens to be the case," answered Aimee.

"Our own discordant restlessness is all that hinders this world from actually being heaven!" replied he emphatically.

"Oh, nonsense! This is earth, and that is good enough for me; I do not wish to think on such gruesome subjects; life is so pleasant. Some time I must prepare for eternity, I suppose;

but I wish to enjoy myself now; it is time enough when I have grown old to be solemn, and give up all pleasures," she half-pouted.

August laid his head back against the boll of the tree and laughed heartily. "So you think that one must be solemn to prepare for eternity? In the first place we are in eternity now—the present is just as much a part of eternity as the future state will be; eternity is only an expression, meaning all time; it always was and always will be, and it seems to me that the very best way to prepare for the future state is to be innocently happy in this——"

"*I* think that you are talking nonsense—you make me afraid!"

"Of what are you afraid? Afraid of opening the door to step into the next room? Afraid to go to sleep in the evening of life, to awaken in the sunlit morning of an advanced day? I'll tell you what, Aimee, if I go before you do—and return is possible—I will come back and tell you what I find in the Beyond."

Aimee jumped up nervously, and walked away without speaking.

August arose at the same time, and leaned against the trunk of the tree. "Come back here!" he called.

"No, indeed! I do not want to hear that kind of talk," she replied irritably.

The clouds had been gathering in the west, and once or twice the thunder had growled menacingly; but in the shelter of the trees they had not observed the signals of the coming storm.

A great drop of rain struck Aimee on the cheek, causing her to utter an exclamation of surprise.

"Come here, Aimee!" called August again, holding out his hands, a smile on his lips; her petulance amused him.

At that instant a bolt of lightning shot from the sky, blinding and bewildering Aimee; it appeared to be at her very feet; her scream of affright was drowned by the crash and reverberation of the thunder; she essayed to go to August for protection, but a numbness paralyzed her brain and limbs; the horses snorted wildly, and galloped away over the road toward home.

In a short time Aimee aroused herself, and called quaveringly, "August! August!" but received no reply.

She made an effort to cross the road, but her head swayed dizzily and her limbs refused to support her body; a cloud-like haze seemed to float between herself and August, where he sat apparently leaning back easily against the tree. A few great drops of rain plashed down—making miniature globes in the dust of the street—they pelted her in the face and served to revive her a little.

"August! August!" she called complainingly; still he made no reply. She shaded her eyes with her hand and peered at him wonderingly; she thought the sunlight was dazzling her vision, everything appeared blurred, distorted and out of proportion; she petulantly resented the smile upon August's lips, she thought that he derided her fear.

"It's mean of you August!" she whimpered as she giddily crossed the dusty road, staggering from side to side as she walked.

The clouds had been gathering thick and fast, and the gloom of a late twilight prevailed; the heavy thunder crashed and roared, following almost blending with—the blinding flashes of electricity.

As she dropped at his feet complainingly, the flood gates of heaven seemed opened; she crept to him, and reached up her arms to clasp his neck in a childishly confident way: "Oh, protect me, August! Do let us seek shelter!"

As her arms closed about his neck his head fell forward inertly, the body lurched over heavily, fell from her weak arms and rolled over sidewise. The heavy rumble of the thunder, the roar of the rain, the wild swaying of the sodden branches, and the flapping of the wet leaves drowned her frightened cries.

"Help! help!" she shrieked again and again; at times high and shrill, again, almost inarticulate—scarcely above a hoarse whisper—as clutching at his clothing she frantically tried to lift him and hold him erect.

"Oh, August, my darling, what ails you? Speak to me! Speak to me!" she cried wildly.

A half-dozen men came dashing down the hill; they had spoken with August and Aimee as they passed on their way; then when the storm was at its height, seeing the horses galloping by riderless, they knew that some accident must have befallen them.

Aimee saw them coming, and redoubled her cries.

"What is the matter?" "Are you hurt?" "Were you thrown from your horses?" It was a babel of sounds; a confusion of questions.

"I do not know! Oh, it is August!" answered Aimee incoherently.

"Stand back," said one who had been stooping over August. Continuing in a low tone, "He is dead, struck by lightning."

"No! no! no!" shrieked Aimee shrilly: "He was speaking but an instant ago; can't you see that he is not dead! Why, he is smiling!"

She clasped him more closely in her arms, and rocked herself back and forth as a mother soothes her child. Gently they loosed her hold, and through the sobbing trees bore their dripping burden to the nearest farmhouse, soothing Aimee's frantic grief with sympathetic words.

August had been so amused at Aimee's petulance and childish fear that he had reached out his hands to call her to him as he would have called a wayward child; in this attitude the descending bolt struck him. He experienced for one brief instant the shock and sense of earthly pain, followed immediately by a feeling of lightness and freedom—which none but children experience in the physical body, and they but seldom—glad to be, glorying in existence—which, instead of being lost through the change, had become intensified and augmented. It seemed that a film had been swept from his sight; all things were clearer and larger; and things which had appeared enveloped in mystery

—difficult to understand—stood out plain and simple, like the white letters upon a blackboard.

His spirit, freed from earthly aches and pains, from the uncomfortable sense of incumbrance, rose like a bird on the wing; his first sense of bewilderment—caused by his rapid transit through space—gave place to an exalted delight as he beheld the wonderful panorama spread out before him—waves of silvery hue, tinged with violet shades—exactly proportioned one with another—like a softly lapping, irridescent sea; long, low slopes clothed in the same subdued color swept by him; he grew weary of the sameness, and wished that he might catch a glimpse of the mountains which should lie beyond those hills; their deep shadows and high lights would be a restful change. Even as the discontent swept over him he plunged into a gulf of shadows—shadows filled with silent voices—desire made manifest without sound or motion—the spiritual understanding of the purely spiritual.

The multitudinous shadows were on every side; pressing on the right, crowding on the left; before him and in the rear; close, closer—urging for companionship; shrieking for guidance through the gulf of the vast Unknown; through the trackless No Land which lies between the material and the spiritual world. He felt their silent despairing cry, that they were lost in this horrible void; they clutched at him as he swept past them, and although there was no sound all this reached his spiritual consciousness like the roar of the tempest, or the tumult

and crash of falling worlds, so magnified was his understanding of all things.

The commotion horrified him; instincts of the plane of life now left behind prompted resentment; he would have fought the impalpable—given physical blows to things of no substance—to shadows. He felt a strange, incongruous sense of mirth as he realized the absurdity of it—was he not a disembodied spirit among a countless throng like unto himself? A wave of pity for himself and all that surging throng swept over him.

He was carried rapidly onward, although he realized no volition of his own; darker, darker grew the way; all the accompanying shadows disappeared until there was nothing to stir the deadly silence and gloom; his longing for sound became torture—it was like holding the breath expecting disaster—he felt an agonized desire to scream, and thus break this horrible, waveless void into billows of uproar. This laying off the flesh—and retaining all of the spiritual activity augmented by being set so entirely free from all limitations of the material plane, yet without chart or compass on the unknown spiritual sea, was suggestive of difficulties bordering upon punishment, instead of the unalloyed happiness expected.

He grew very weary of this continued progress, with no known end in view; it is the hope of accomplishment which makes all things—even waiting — bearable. He whimsically likened himself to a fly in a sea of ink; he was but a somber atom in a shroud of darkness, just a trifle more dense than his environment.

After that which seemed to him ages of time and limitless space—forgetful that beyond the physical life there could exist neither time nor space, as both are of man's comprehension—the density lightened a trifle; a seeming wall rose somberly before him, a tantalizing suggestion of a means of ingress; and as he looked in fear and amaze a door opened, from which there issued a blinding light, and illumined by its rays he beheld a creature more beautiful than the imagination of man ever conceived.

The strong, onward-bearing current seemed at once to set in that direction; thus, he became aware that his wish, his desire, governed the current; heretofore he had drifted aimlessly—having nobody to control—and failing to comprehend that the spirit could be directed. The knowledge came to him as does that which we call intuition—which is nothing more nor less than spiritual understanding—that his wish controlled the spirit, as his desire had governed the body.

We often hear the departed spoken of as the "shade;" he found that upon which he now gazed quite the reverse; a luminosity—outlining a charming vagueness—a suggestion of the beautiful rather than a fact. The reality never yet possessed the lure for man which suggestion holds; there was a delusion of starry eyes, flowing hair, lips glowing with the enticement of kisses, like the bewilderment of an entrancing dream; a seeming vague roundness of form, which was but a figment of the desire.

Warm and languorous grew the compelling current; fear fell away, a mad desire for possession taking its place. His gaze seemed fixed upon the entrancing vision. He was almost within the portal when a shudder ran through his spirit as a chill goes through the body; a sudden wavering of the spiritual vision, then—an appalled shrinking.

The dismay caused a quick turning of the onward-bearing force, which shot him out into the darkness; the door closed behind him, and his intelligence collapsed for a brief space of time.

That which had so frightened him was an abysmal pit, filled with fighting, struggling fiends, each bearing a horrible impress of his particular sin stamped upon his pain-distorted, shadowy semblance of a human face, in characters as legible as words upon a written page. Their sins continually mocked them; all their evil desires remained, accentuated by their inability to gratify the evil propensities. His most poignant fright was caused by recognizing many whom he had known in the material life, who had stood high in the world's esteem, and had worn a cloak of superior sanctity.

Helplessly he floated on; in his awful collapse he was unable to will his course—if indeed he had known any course or destination. The awful, crowding shadows seemed to bear him with them; he thought that he had escaped them, yet here they were, and he was again but one of a gruesome, soundless throng.

He soon recovered from his fright, and was

carried forward, if not more hopefully, yet more resignedly, and thus he came to another door; inscribed thereon in mellow radiance was this legend, "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

With a thrill he remembered his earthly teaching. He drew near in fear and awe—he thought to gently knock. Alas! Hands he had not!

Grief surged through his spirit: "Ah, if I could but knock, that I might enter in out of the shadows and despair!" he sighed. Even as the wish formed, the door seemed to roll gently away; a soft glow enveloped him; sweet odors encompassed him; a warm wave wafted him onward; the door silently slid into place. With joy he realized that his humble desire had typified knocking. All within was light, glory and beauty.

Fear seized him; shame of his imperfections held him motionless.

On every side, wafting around him, were creatures of surpassing loveliness; no blemish visible in any one of them. In the body absolute perfection of mind or matter is not to be found; here, the rule seemed to be reversed—there existed not the slightest variation from lines of perfect symmetry. Waves of intelligence floated out from each released spirit, pure as the flawless diamond, and as calm as the waveless sea; it seemed to him that over all there rested—not a chill—but the absence of warmth; warmth and love are not compatible with absolute perfection.

All human love is more or less riotous and

selfish; the passion is like an ocean, whose billows roll high, or rock in a gentle lullaby, but never, never an unbroken calm. Also, ardor and warmth are the fruit of desire, not necessarily sinful, but of the leaven of humanity.

He felt, in the presence of these spirits of purity, the taint of the world clinging to him like a soiled garment; he fancied he could smell the mold of the grave, the odor of his decaying body.

He looked with amaze upon those spirits from whom no thought emanated save eternal worship of the Eternal One, seated forever on a "Great White Throne" in their midst; before which even the fronded palms seemed to lift up their heads in adoration.

All have read that the floor of heaven is laid over "with gold and precious stones;" and whose "walls are of jasper and onyx, and all things costly and precious."

All other emotions now gave place to wonder. How could the earthly be so mixed up with the spiritual? How could the love of "all things costly" remain, and no taint of humanity linger? The desire for gold was born of greed; and the love of precious stones was sired by selfishness.

No one of all that vast throng seemed to observe him; the spiritual vision of all seemed to be fixed upon Him who sat on high. A great number seemed to have no vocation except to float around and around the throne; the concourse seemed incessant, interminable. Another mighty number twanged invisible harps.

Here was fresh cause for amazement. How could a bodiless spirit touch the strings of a harp? How could sound exist where there were no ears? Does not science demonstrate that there is no such thing as noise, unless there are ears to hear? This then was another figment of the spiritual intelligence.

His ideas became so tangled that it worried him, but he finally summed up in this manner; each intelligence received that which was desired purely, or believed implicitly; music, worship, beauty; each but an expression of adoration. A narrow limit, truly!

Many vapory forms floated around him, gently touching him with shadowy wings. One sweet spirit ever pressed closely to his side as they neared him in their slowly circling around that central figure — like motes in the sun. A thought wave flowed from her intelligence to him, which he interpreted, "Come join with me. Let us worship together!"

He hesitated; the movements looked very dreamy and poetic, but what had that to do with spirituality?

Each spirit beamed with benignant light; eternal sweetness wafted around them like the odor of innumerable flowers heavy with dew. Thought waves rippled from spirit to spirit, transparent as a pellucid sea, gentle as when the sweet south wind fans it into low, languid swells; pure as are the lilies, and sweet unto faintness, as is their odor. His desire hungered piteously: "Oh, for the scarlet of the passion flower and the gold of the homely dandelion!" The sweet

spirit gently touched him with filmy wings; a thought wave reached his consciousness: "Cease rebelling; you disturb the heavenly harmony. Oh come! Come with me!"

It seemed that a sigh floated past him—it could not be—but oh, all things were so unreal! Even the holiness and perfection seemed dreamy and untrue—too cold and calm.

A shiver ran through his spirit he felt his earthiness cling about his spirituality as had sodden garments adhered to his physical form; he was weighted down by a sense of unworthiness and imperfection. The teachings of his humanity so held him in thrall that he could not climb the heights of exaltation on a single thought as all these souls appeared to do.

The alluring spirit came again; pressing still more closely pleading yet more fervently; a hint of earthly love in her prayer—vaguely suggestive—as were all things else.

He felt the Lofty Intelligence looking him through and through, and his mind turned with a mighty longing to his former habitation; to him it seemed that the limitations of the flesh were not so narrow as this circumscribed routine. In this place was no progression; on earth, one might at least make an effort.

Reproachfully, compellingly, the Immaculate gazed upon him.

Sweetly, gently, 'the fair spirit lured him, until his will was compelled, and side by side with her who had so sweetly entreated, he joined the slowly revolving circle.

Having once consented, turning back was an

impossibility; therein they differed from those in the flesh. We easily slip from our effort after higher things, and when we fall, fall far; they, having once turned their spiritual gaze upward, could not turn away. As he floated on, side by side with the Beauteous One, her sweet magnetism enveloped him like the odor of wild wood flowers.

His amazement increased; what worth in all this if he possessed no free will? Compulsory virtue is of no avail. He wondered what purpose they served floating about like butterflies on a summer breeze; and if it was any particular pleasure to the Lord of All to behold them gyrate? Oh dear! And did He never tire of even the Great White Throne?

He thought, with a chill of repulsion, that the Perfect One, who did nothing but sit on a throne to be worshiped, was a less beautiful expressions of the Deity than the flowers of the field, or the birds that wing their glad flight through the ether; also, that the incessant twanging of harps was not so sweet a music, or so filled with worship, as the babbling of the brook, or the whisper of the wind, to Him who created them.

He was so weary of it all, even to the vapory, melodious voices of the shadowy choir; he wondered if they never rested; also, if it was because of the taint of his humanity that he could not appreciate the beauty and sublimity of it.

He remembered that from childhood he had been taught that heaven was as he now saw it, and whenever he had been given a hard task it

had appeared to him that the height of enjoyment would be in having nothing to do; and that heaven was a place of eternal rest, had ever been held out as an inducement to exalted virtue, and—excessive labor. He found the inactivity terribly irksome, it reminded him of worldly *ennui;* then, the unreality bewildered him—it was like pressing the fingers upon the eyelids—persons, places and things are vividly seen, and yet we know that it is but a chimera of the brain; a vision of the intelligence. So he grew to doubt the reality of everything. He could not keep his spirituality keyed up to the proper pitch; his intelligence would wander back to earth and mortal love. The purely spiritual seemed to him to be lacking. It is only given to humanity to burn hot and cold; to reach the heights of bliss and the depths of despair; even that which we call despair has its amelioration, for never yet was it so dark but, given a little time, humanity looks upward to where the sun is shining, and hopes and strives to reach the illuminated summit; but here—there could be but this endless sameness through all eternity, without even the pleasure of striving, "thus far shalt thou go, and no farther."

He rebelled madly; he preferred the trials and the pains of the body, with the power to control his actions, to the spiritual and no will of his own. Eternal leisure has its unpleasant features, though many seem to suppose that eternal leisure and eternal felicity are synonymous.

He looked back with positive longing to the

hard work, and consequent weariness; from bodily fatigue rest had been sweet; but the unending spiritual lassitude of eternity was terrible to contemplate. A sad, reproachful thought wave met his pessimistic, spiritual cry; with shame and terror, he felt that the Perfect One saw all his discontent and rebellion—still he could not but wonder. Had all these placid souls been as easily swayed while in the body, as they were in the spirit? Their very sweetness and complaisance exasperated him; he thought, with a very human perverseness, that he should like to see one of them get angry, so as to get up a little excitement; instead, they were as sweet as the dripping sap of the budding maple, and—as insipid. Things and persons can be too good. Better a thunderstorm and a purified atmosphere than a sultry, lifeless day.

The exasperation grew upon him. The thought wave from his companion was like a perpetual sigh; a curious blending of the wish to adore, and the desire to be loved. He felt the reproach of the myriad souls who brushed him with filmy wings. Sad reproof fell upon him from Him seated over all.

Waves of love and adoration rose and fell on the soft, enervating air, like strains of languid music, the perfect rhythm madly suggestive to him of the sweetness and longing of human love. This love of his companion spirit revolted him; it was like a draught of tepid water to the traveler dying of heat and thirst; her thought wave had the effect of clinging hands, which

would not let him go, and he grew almost to hate her.

As they once more came around that endless circle he saw the door sliding noiselessly open, a spirit was for an instant outlined against the darkness without; the door had already commenced to close; he madly broke away from the compelling current of the She, who would have held him. His consciousness felt her despairing cry breaking the placidity of that spiritual atmosphere, as the tornado sweeps the ocean, lashing it into frightful waves.

The All Seeing looked at him with awful wrath and majesty. He but sped the faster. The door was closing rapidly; he forgot the terrors of the darkness without—he forgot the multitude of drifting souls, and their horrible contact—he forgot that he knew not where he should go in all that limitless gloom; he strove madly to reach the door ere it closed, to once more shut him into that horrible inactivity, and forced semblance of adoration.

He reached the door—yet a little space open; the guardian angel paused in amazement—it sufficed. He darted through; but instead of floating off on the magnetic current as he had expected, he plunged downward—down, down, down! Would he never reach a resting-place?

Oh, for a voice to cry aloud! Oh, for the company of even the gruesome shadows! Though he loathed and feared them, this absolute isolation held a greater terror, the fear that this state

might be perpetual. One of the first principles of all life is resistance, and deprived of all motive—which is but another way of saying of all power of resistance—he felt as though in the throes of a spiritual vertigo.

He struggled frantically to cry aloud, he imagined that a ray of light pierced the gloom in the distance; with a mad effort he struggled upward, unseen hands caught and held him down, and still that tantalizing ray of light flickered and glowed like a beckoning ray of hope.

Within its radius grew a face—his swooning soul revived—it bore the lineaments of Aimee; she too must have passed over to the Beyond.

Like sweetest music a sound reached him; sweeter than all the mythical harps are the tones of the human voice—and succeeding the deadly silence through which he had passed—it flooded his whole being with delight. Aimee was stooping over him caressingly, her words were very simple: "August, dear, are you better?"

His fingers closed feebly over her hand, as he whispered faintly, "Oh, I fell so far! How came you to catch me?"

She answered him soothingly, and held an invigorating drink to his lips; he drank obediently and immediately dropped into a refreshing slumber.

. . . . . .

When through the rush and roar of the storm the frightened men bore August's body to the farmhouse there was no disfiguring trace upon him except a slight blue line, like a faint pencil mark, extending from brow to chin; he lay like

one asleep, that faint, sweet smile still upon his lips. In a state of mental collapse Aimee accompanied them, and for days her condition bordered upon insanity; when they made preparations to bury August, she cried so piteously that he was not dead, that they were forced to delay the final ceremonies; this was repeated until her persistence won a measure of unwilling belief, and a council of physicians was called, who decided that he was in a cataleptic condition.

Aimee scarcely left his bedside until he recovered consciousness.

About a week after this occurred, as he lay on a couch drawn up to the open window, languidly looking at the softly rustling leaves, the green grass the glowing flowers, he sighed restlessly.

Aimee was at his side instantly: "What is it, August? Are you in pain?"

"Oh, no! I was only thinking how much nicer this is than heaven, and wondering why it is that people are not more content in this beautiful world; we have such infinite variety, such happy conditions, and yet humanity is so unsatisfied." He paused a moment, then asked, "Didn't you know that I was in heaven while I was dead?"

"I know that you are talking fearful nonsense!" answered Aimee severely.

"Do you think it nonsense that I think this world so beautiful?" he asked teasingly.

"You know that I do not mean that; but that is nonsense about your going to heaven."

"But I did go there and it made me awful

tired! I am glad that I returned to earth again," said he.

"Oh, August! You are perfectly horrid!" was Aimee's shocked rejoinder.

He smiled, but went on to relate his strange experience.

"But you were not really dead, you know," she replied as he finished the recital.

"Do you think that?" he answered thoughtfully; "I should like to have some one—some person who really knows—explain the difference between that which is called trance, and death, except as to duration. Where was my soul during all that time? Not in the body of a certainty. I know that my spirit went to heaven; everything there was just as I had been taught from childhood that it would be; that teaching could not by any possibility be wrong!" he added conclusively, but with a merry twinkle in his eye.

Later on, sweetly and seriously he said, "I shall always love and appreciate nature so much more for that experience; of things infinite we know not the method; we behold the result, and we know that the Creator *is*. All nature unites into a rhythm of grandest praise to Him who is part and parcel of all things good. The leaf on the tree whispers of his abiding presence; the flower that springs from the mold lifts its face to the sun and air, and speaks of the Life, glorifying Him with its beauteous colors. God is the very principle of all life. He is not an Idle God; his work goes on forever, without haste, without cessation. We are created in his

image; not as to the physical, which must change its form, and subserve in other ways, but as to the spiritual, which, if we will not pervert our higher natures—will grow to sublime heights of purity and goodness—the higher we place our standard the nearer we approach the Divine.

"We sin continually against our better selves, our physical bodies and our spiritual natures, we gorge the body and starve the mind; we overwork the perishable physical, and let the mental and spiritual rust, while we heap up a little gold and silver for those who shall come after us to squander and quarrel over. We strive after a heaven in the future, and neglect that which only is ours to-day. Why wait for an impossible time, and a mythical place? We had best take a share of it each day; it is here if we will accept it; for, dearest Aimee, what does heaven mean but *happiness?*"

THE TRAGEDY OF THE GNOMES.

MANY, many ages ago this fair old world of ours wore a solemn and forbidding aspect; no carpet of thick, green grass eased the footfall of man as he climbed the hills; no human voice was heard amid the desolation—ice, ice everywhere—from the North Pole to the center of that which is now the temperate zone, and only such life peopled this region as could endure the rigor of a more than arctic condition. Vast sheets of ice, in depth immeasurable, covered the surface of the hills and valleys, broken toward the tropics into serrated edges—the verdure running up an occasional valley, as though in laughing derisions of its neighbors the ice-imprisoned mountains.

In those days there existed only hideous animals and reptiles of size great and awful; animals whose terrible voice shook the mountains like an earthquake; slimy or scaly reptiles who walked on many feet, or dragged a hideous length along the ice-covered rocks. It seemed as if the great Creator must have fashioned all existent things in an hour of wrath, or that man, having existed, had been for some sin exterminated by that icy inundation, and that animal creation had so displeased him that he had

fashioned them in grotesque caricature upon all grace and beauty.

Man esteems himself higher than all other created things; who shall say that the great, buzzing bluebottle fly does not think the same of himself, and perhaps, with as much reason; it is at most but a grade of intelligence; and what do we understand of that Intelligence which is above *us?*

In one of the green valleys running up into the foothills of what is now called the Rocky Mountains, frisked and played a band of Gnomes. These were but a fairy people, differing only from the fairies of woodland glade and dell in this; those fairy folk were things of beauty like imprisoned sunbeams; lighter than gossamer, they floated hither and thither, always trending toward the tropics, where the sun shone radiantly warm, and the silvery moon lighted the verdant carpet of grass, and the sweet south wind rang the lily bells in merry chime; there they idled away each sunny day—creatures of light and frivolity.

These Gnomes were a sturdier, darker folk, short in stature, but with a breadth of shoulder, a depth of chest, and muscles fit for giants. Though for an occasional frolic they danced and roughly tossed each other about in the valley, they better loved their homes in the heart of the ice covered mountains, where they forged beautiful things from the yellow metal, or decked their cavern homes with softly glowing, or fiery-eyed jewels; thus from earnest labor their faces gained a look of firmness and deter-

mination; they were homely, but were good to look upon, lighted as their faces were by love and kindliness.

One among them was wondrously fair: Lilleela they called her. Her hair was like silk as it winds from the cocoon; her eyes were blue as the sky when it shows between the fleecy clouds of summer; her cheeks were as though they had been kissed by the wild rose blooms, which left their dainty stains upon the fair skin. She was as sweet and pure as the breath of the dawn.

Walada was her lover; a short, deep-chested giant, with a face like a ripe walnut—all seams and puckers; not with age, but with jolly laughter, and intent, hard work. Lilleela must have the finest of rubies, on strings of beaten gold; tiny silver bells must be made, to ring their sweet chimes with every joyous movement; dainty chains of gold—set with amethyst, rubies and diamonds—must be wrought to bind the floating cloud of hair. Away down in the heart of the mountain Walado plied his little hammer of polished stone—clink-clink-clink all day long like a refrain it accompanied his happy song.

One fair day the troop of Gnomes went down into the green valley for a holiday.

Walado objected: "No, no! You can go, but I must finish this golden girdle for my Lilleela, and then, there are sandals of gold to be set with precious stones for her feet—they are too sweet and fair to be bruised by the rocks," he had answered, screwing up his face into a funny little smile.

"Oh, do come, Walado! The girdle and san-

dals can wait! The sun is so cold and sorrowful up here, but down in the valley it is so beautiful!" pleaded Lilleela.

Her blue eyes moulded his will like warm wax, and over the ice they sped away many, many miles, to where its broken edges lay like icicles flattened out with huge rollers; some having sharp, sword-like points, others rounded and scalloped, as though in fanciful adornment. All along the border of the valley, reaching in places high up on the mountain side—wherever there were breaks in the ice—hardy trees had planted their feet, and lifted their heads to catch a breath of the warmer air of the tropics; some few, essaying to climb still higher, or being less hardy—reached their dead arms abroad, or pointed with ghostly fingers toward the icy desolation in warning to their kind.

These happy, childlike beings, instead of walking, had a gliding movement which carried them over the ground very rapidly; laughing, tumbling, pushing one another in merry sport, they sped on as though wings were attached to their feet. Hand in hand went Walado and Lilleela; his nut-brown face drawing into a nest of comical wrinkles, which were so many happy smiles; her look was like the sun, bright and warm.

Of a sudden she stopped and shivered: "Oh, my Walado, what was that?" From off the mountain height had come a long, low wail, and a chill was borne with it which froze them with fear.

Walado gathered her in his embrace, and

shading his eyes with one hand, looked back over the mountain: "Fear not, my Lilleela, 'tis but the voice of the storm on its way from the far north. See! We shall soon be in the beautiful valley, where he cannot come!"

"Let us hasten, then, for in my heart I feel a chill which is like death."

Walado gathered her closer to him: "Little sun beam! Am I not able to shield you from the shadow of the dark cloud?"

She patted his brown face with her wee, rose-leaf palms, and kissed the wrinkles on his brown cheeks lovingly.

"Yes, my Walado; your arm is as strong as your heart is brave, but—" she broke off abruptly: "Let us fly!" she finished with a sound between a laugh and a sob as the wailing came borne from the mountain heights once more.

Turning their affrighted glance backward, they saw the tall pines at the foot of the hills swaying wildly; some which stood so tall and straight were snatched off like a brittle weed and tossed down the mountain side.

Lilleela shivered again, remembering the look the fearful Ice King had given her as he rode above the mountain height upon which she stood at twilight hour; he was seated upon a cloud of inky blackness; his eyes shot forth red and yellow flame, like the terrible light which streamed up from the far north; his lips were blue and hideous, and his matted hair, and long, tangled beard, were a mixture of frost and ice. He pointed a finger at her which looked as though

belonging to the hand of one long since dead—so rigid and bloodless it appeared—the nails showed blue and ghastly. With a voice like the whistling north wind, he said, "You'll make a bonny bride for the Ice King! Your youth will warm my old blood finely! o-We-ee, Y-e-ss!" The cloud passed on, and bore him from her view, but the deadly chill remained, for well Lilleela knew that his love meant death, as his hate meant destruction.

For this reason the wailing sound shook her with an awful fear, but she dared not tell Walado; she feared that he would turn and seek the terrible monarch whose simple touch was death; once more she caught Walado's hand, crying gayly, "Come, come, before the storm god overtakes us!"

They romped and played through all that happy day; they climbed the steep inclines, and sitting on the glittering ice dashed down to the valley below, tumbling over and over, with laughter sweet as the tinkling of silver bells; it seemed strange to hear such sweet and musical sounds issuing from those queer little bodies, but the sound fitfuly represented the sweet harmonious souls within.

At last, worn out with play, they climbed the long, icy hills; they wound around the towering rocks, they clung to dizzy precipices; they crept by the lairs of horrible animals with noiseless tread; ever upward and onward toward the North Pole, where life had grown old and dead, while the new life had slipped down toward the equator.

"Oh, why do we journey so far to-night, Walado?" said Lilleela wearily.

"There is a mountain lying in the light of the northern star, which is filled with yellow gold; its caverns are lined with jewels; I seek them for you, my Lilleela."

As he ceased speaking, again that wailing sound filled with awful menace smote their ears: "o-o-W-ee" a sound that rose from fretful discontent into fiercest anger, then died away like a long sigh of satisfied hate.

"I am afraid, Walado! Oh do return!" cried Lilleela in terror.

" 'Tis but the wind, beloved one," answered Walado stoutly, though he too shivered.

"Nay! nay! It is the Ice King passing by in his chariot of storm, and drawn by his slaves —the winds of the hurricane," she cried frantically, fear making her pallid lips tremble.

Walado's wrinkled visage grew stern—all the pleasant lines drawn out of it; he understood more than her words told him.

"Has he dared to look upon you, with a desire to possess you? Knows he not that you are mine? I am not worthy of you—except as love for you makes me worthy—" his voice dropping into tender cadence, "but he—the monarch of all cruelty—is not of our kind. His very kiss is death; let him find a bride in his own frozen empire—the North Pole!" He shook his clinched hand in the direction of the swift rushing shadow, which so depressed them all: "Haste! haste, men and maidens! Let us flee to our own mountain home, where we can defy

the monster! Our Lilleela has just cause for fear, for none upon whom he has looked with the desire for possession ever escaped him; and it is only by speedily reaching our caverns that we may hope for safety."

They turned about, and like a flock of frightened birds they flitted away, with no more noise than would be made by the rustle of a bat's wing, and were lost in the gloom.

The moon shone out cold and pale, as though grieving over the dread desolation and lighted up the angry face of the Ice King with a pallid luster; he puffed out his gaunt cheeks menacingly; his eyes darted flame like the quick thrusts of a sword blade in deadly battle; as he saw that the Gnomes had fled he shrieked in wrath. He swayed the tall trees, and tossed their dead branches in every direction; he fiercely threw the rocks from the lofty mountain summits, and as they went crashing down, down, with thunderous noise, they splintered and tore up the ice like a silver foam, which glittered and flashed with pale prismatic glow as it caught the moon's sad, cold ray.

Faster, faster flew the tiny band; closer clung Lilleela to Walado's hand as that wrathful shriek reached their ears; dashing wildly past the brow of the darkly towering mountain, as the crashing of rocks smote them with wild affright; leaping across the roaring torrent, to slip and sprawl on the glassy ice of the further bank; up and away, brusied and sore; past lifeless trees, whose dead branches were falling all about them, until at last they reached a mountain home seldom used

by them. Nothing was to be seen save a tiny crevice between the rocks; one after another they lay down, and silently slid through; then, and not until then, Walado spoke:

"We are safe! Even the Ice King cannot enter here! We are safe, quite safe!"

"Are you sure? Ah, my Walado, he is so vengeful!" sighed Lilleela. Walado laughed, all his funny little puckers laughing as well:

"He knows nothing of our hiding-place, and he could not force his great rigid body through the narrow opening. Oh, we are quite safe!" he reiterated gleefully.

But Lilleela sighed.

Walado felt the hopelessness of that sound, and it grieved his tender heart; he passed his rugged, brown hand over her flossy hair, with a touch as soft as the brushing of a butterfly's wing.

"My treasure, if ill befall us here in this our vaulted hall, there are still the lower caverns, where none can possibly come save 'we who know'."

They soon regained confidence, and joked and made merry; they were such trusting, childlike beings, taking the comfort and joy of each hour at its utmost worth.

Their enjoyment was at its height, when faintly heard came that long chilling wail. Two of their number had gone outside unnoticed by Walado; they came shooting in through the entrance, their brown faces bleached an ashen gray, their teeth chattering, their eyes protruding. All sprang up in wild affright.

"Where have you been? What is the matter?" cried Walado, as sternly as the gentle soul could speak.

"We but crept out for the birds we had snared! We thought to help out the feast!" said Tador, the hairy one.

"And I had a skin of berries that I gathered in the valley below; they were very sweet, Walado!" answered Sudana, the good.

"Tell me what you saw," replied Walado sadly, his anger melted away by their deprecating looks and words.

Sudana answered: "We saw the Ice King; his cloud chariot so low that it touched the top of the mountain, he was so angry that the frost flew in great clouds from his nostrils; his breath reached us and chilled us through."

Walado opened his lips to speak, when—"O-o-W-W-ee," filling all that vaulted chamber with the dread sound, it came borne on a wind so chill that it pierced the hearts of each with cold and fear.

These loving souls had never felt the need of a ruler, each doing his utmost through love for all, thus there had been no dissensions; now all turned instinctively to Walado for guidance. They were growing benumbed with the chill of that icy breath.

Walado silently pointed to the narrow passage leading deep into the bowels of the earth. Each took his beloved by the hand and prepared for the descent; before they had taken so much as one step, there came a crash so awful that it shook the great mountain to its center; the fall-

ing of rocks resounded in deafening commotion; the Ice King's snarling wail echoed and re-echoed throughout the cavern; bitter, bitter cold grew the air; crash—crash—crash, came the sound of falling mountains heaped upon them; covering them deeply beneath the *débris*.

Then was a new horror added; the roaring and growling of many horrible beasts, as they fought and struggled for entrance through the narrow passageway, to escape the falling ruins, and the deadly cold.

There was the shrieking and tumult of the tempest; the hiss and roar of the struggling reptiles, but higher and shriller than all else was the fierce wailing menace of the angry Ice King; it shrieked to them insolently: "You defy me, do you? We'll see! We'll s-e-e!"

Gray and pallid grew the little brown faces as they silently followed Walado down into the bowels of the earth until they came to a lofty room; here they huddled silently together.

Thus they remained day after day, night after night, no ray of light to distinguish the one from the other; but as time passed on the pangs of hunger assailed them fiercely. Tador's birds were divided, and by morsels eaten; Sudana's berries were parceled out by ones and by twos, Walado adding all his share to Lilleela's, although she knew not that it was so; grayer grew his little, wrinkled face, but ever it smiled tenderly upon Lilleela, and with patient kindness he answered all questions in unselfish endeavor to comfort and cheer the others. For a time they could feel the earth quiver and vibrate as

though in shuddering fear, then came a time of awful calm, when the sound of a voice smote the deadly silence with all the horror of thunder tones, until they shrank affrighted, and spoke only in awed whispers—afraid of the awful echo which answered sound. Paler and more spirit-like grew Lilleela; sadder, sadder grew Walado as he pillowed her head upon his broad breast. The sighs of all rose incessantly!

At last Tador whispered, "Shall I not descend further toward the center of the earth? It will be warmer than it is here—it grows so very cold!" shivering.

"As you wish, Tador," replied Walado sadly.

Hearing Walado's answer all clamored to accompany him—anything seemed preferable to this inaction.

As they prepared for the descent, Sudana said: "We do not know what we may find, Walado," trying to speak hopefully.

"Gold and jewels in plenty, but all that lies hidden in the whole mountain range, are not worth as much as one juicy berry," and he glanced at Lilleela's wan face. She was far too weak to accompany the party, and all insisted that Walado must remain with her; he silently folded her in his arms; he would not have left her.

She raised her sad eyes to his face: "Better had I have given myself to the Ice King; then I only should have perished," she said.

"No! no! no!" whispered they, as with one voice.

Wearily, wearily time passed on, but they did

not return. Lilleela dozed and whispered fitfully, but Walado sat with staring eyes, and listened intently for sounds of his comrades, he was afraid to move lest he disturb his precious burden.

At last she raised herself up on her elbow, her eyes full of agony: "Oh, Walado, take me up above—I cannot breathe here! Oh, I must get one breath of air!" her chest heaving convulsively, her hollow cheeks palpitating with the struggle for inhalation.

One great tear rolled down Walado's cheek, and fell splashing on the rocky floor.

Around his waist he wore a rope made of the hide of animals, which served to hold his stone hammer and ax; with this rope he bound Lilleela to him, passing it under her arms and around his neck.

"Dear one, put your arms about my neck to steady yourself all that you are able, and I will carry you safely up."

Her chest rose and fell spasmodically; her heart fluttered faintly, or thumped with wild, irregular motion.

The walls of the shaft were covered with ice, rendering it almost impossible to obtain a foothold; inch by inch he made slow headway, every muscle strained to its utmost tension; his hands leaving stains of blood with every grasp. He could at last see a ray—scarcely of light, but a little less gloom; he was so exhausted that he was gasping for breath; he placed his hands upon a slight projection for one more effort—it may have been that his eagerness was too great,

or that he grasped but brittle ice which broke off—for he fell. Down, down he slipped, with inconceivable rapidity; weak from want of food, and frightened lest he injure his beloved, he lost his presence of mind.

Lilleela recalled his wandering faculties; after one frantic scream, she made no outcry—indeed she had little breath for speech—but with her lips close to his ear she whispered: "Throw out your hands and feet against the wall, and I will do the same; we may at least break the fall!" Little by little the speed decreased, until as Walado's foot touched another projection they stopped altogether. He waited long enough to recover breath and a little strength. Lilleela's head fell over sidewise; she had fainted, and hung a dead weight about his neck; he dared not loose his hands, though he madly longed to caress the cheek which felt so cold to his trembling lips. Once more, nerved by desperation, he made an effort to reach the upper cave; slowly and carefully he climbed; resting often—a hand or foot slipping—clinging frantically as the ice became thicker, and the ascent more difficult. At last, just as his fingers were over the upper edge his foot slipped, and threw the other from its resting-place; for one breathless instant he hung suspended by his fingers—Lilleela's lifeless weight dragging him down! Sparks of fire shot before his eyes! A noise as of rushing water sounded in his ears: His breathing became labored and stertorious! A bitter cry rose to his lips as Lilleela's cold cheek touched his drooping face; he made one supreme effort, and

half unconscious he lay upon the floor of the upper cavern, Lilleela's cold form clasped in his embrace!

The chill at length restored him to consciousness; he sat up and unbound Lilleela; he struck two pieces of flint rapidly together, and ignited the punk which he carried in a bag about his neck. He observed that the cold wind had ceased blowing in, thus he knew that the Ice King must have departed, probably believing that all were dead. Well, so they were—all but himself—and—perhaps Lilleela!

He felt for her heart, but could find no pulsation; he kissed her cold cheeks, and blew his warm breath between her parted lips; at last the madness of despair took possession of him. He groveled on the icy floor! He shrieked aloud, to be answered only by a thousand hollow echoes! He ran to the opening through which they had entered, and found the passage barred by rocks and dirt; he tore at the rubbish with his hands as an animal digs with its claws, only to fall back in despair with the tears coursing down his cheeks.

"Oh, my Lilleela! If I could but reach the air! If I could only carry you into the sunshine and let it warm your cold face! Oh, my Lilleela. Oh, my Lilleela!" he cried, gathering her once more into his arms. All the cave was now lighted with a dim, red light, from a few slivers of wood ignited with the burning punk. Water had oozed through the rocks from above and formed long, glittering icicles, frozen by the fierce breath of the Ice King; the floors and

walls were likewise of ice, cold and scintillating. The sighs which had arisen from the imprisoned Gnomes had congealed into forms of wonderful beauty, as pure as the white souls of the passing spirits; all over that arched ceiling hung fairy curtains of frost, wonderful jewels, each like a frozen tear, ornamented each jutting point. Walado sat down with his back against an angle of the wall, and clasped Lilleela in loving embrace; he smiled sadly yet lovingly as his eyes rested upon walls and dome: "It is a fitting tomb for thy fair body, my beloved! Thy spirit, not even the Ice King can imprison; and I—thine even in death—I go with thee, to serve thee still!"

He bowed his face against her fair hair, and as he so rested his spirit left his homely little body.

It seems almost a pity that they could not have known how fully their wrongs were avenged. Hot waves washed up from the tropic seas and melted the crust of ice with which the cruel monarch had encased all the hills; and he was driven by the south wind to his lair at the North Pole, there to remain in expiation forever. Thus the hills became fertile, and with the passing of those pure souls there sprang to life on the mountain side—the primrose, for Lilleela's pink-white skin; the columbine, for the azure of her eyes; the gentian, for the crimson of her lips; and the tall, white lily, for the stately grace of her body; and always the brown-coated robin, with his warm breast, sings lovingly by day and sleeps in their midst by night, and thus Walado's soul still faithfully serves his beloved.

AN UNFAIR EXCHANGE.

In and around the bank of "Lombard and Lombard" all was confusion.

Arthur Lombard, the senior member of the firm, had suddenly fallen to the floor as he was entering his office, to all appearance dead. Physicians were hastily summoned; policemen were called to keep out the ubiquitous small boy, and the omnipresent curiosity seeker. The great doors were closed with a crash as the grave physician gave his verdict: "He is dead; heart failure!" The truth which conveys a great grief, ever seems heartless, and in a degree, coarse.

Death shocks us ever, we think of it as connected with a sick bed and fit preparation; deep down in our inner consciousness we form plans; when the dark angel shall knock at our door, we will hastily don our robes of sanctity, and fly away to eternal bliss. We are horrified when he smites one of our number unaware—but we never think it might have been us instead.

The dead body was removed to his residence in the most fashionable part of the city; crape hung from the elegant portal; crape draped the closed doors of the bank, and lent adventitious aid to the gloom of the high walled, narrow street.

How many truly mourned I cannot say; a merchant in high standing exchanged views with an artisan, both equally interested, as both had all they possessed in the bark, albeit one had thousands of dollars deposited, the other but a few hundred.

"How will it affect the bank?" questioned the artisan.

"I really could not say, but I think not seriously," was the guarded reply.

"As I understand, he was the head of the concern."

"Y-e-s, but Gus Lombard is all right. It is a pity, though, that Arthur was taken off."

Such is the sorrow of the world; a few who have known us intimately may feel a less selfish grief; our motives are so complex, and selfishness so much a part of human nature, that we seldom judge our own actions correctly. If but one or two can say with sincerity that our lives and our language were pure, then we shall not have lived in vain, as every living being—whether good or bad—will influence some other to follow his example. Lombard had been an unmarried man, who kept up a fine establishment, and lived in good style; but being very reticent few knew aught of his business affairs.

He was laid out in one of the parlors; windows were darkened; lamps were shaded; heavy carpets deadened the footfalls, until the silence and gloom became oppressive.

Late at night, three days after he was stricken down, a slight, fair girl entered the parlor noiselessly; Edith Herford had been his ward; she

had also been his betrothed, although no one save his brother Gus was aware of the fact. Noiselessly she pushed aside the *portières*, and seeing the man on watch lying back in his chair, sleeping soundly, she crossed the room, and knelt beside the coffin.

Sobs shook her slight frame as she laid her face on his cold breast: "Oh, Arthur, my beloved!" she whispered, caressing his cold face, kissing the folded hands.

"To-morrow they will put you out of my sight, and I shall be indeed bereft. Oh, my love! my love!"

With bowed head she wept silently; the ticking of the clock sounded loud and awesome in the unnatural silence, "tick-tock, tick-tock; time-going, time-gone," it seemed to say; the breathing of the sleeping watcher vibrated on the still air like an electric shock; a brooding mystery seemed to hang over the dead form, it appeared like sculptured marble, which at any moment might become instinct with life; it was hard to realize that the soul had gone from the body, the features were so placid, and were tinged with a roseate glow by the shades on the incandescent light.

Edith's nerves were keyed up to their highest pitch, it seemed to her that she must scream; as she pressed her lips to the cold hand, she fancied that there was a slight movement of the fingers; she thought the eyelids quivered; she pressed her handkerchief over her mouth, afraid she should cry out.

"Oh, Arthur! My Arthur! I know that you

are gone from me forever, and this is but a delusive fancy, would it were true, that I might not be so lonely!" she whispered, gazing mournfully at him.

The watcher stirred in his sleep, muttering low and indistinctly. Edith started up in wild affright, her heart beating tumultuously; to her excited imagination the lights seemed to burn dimly, as though about to go out.

The watcher shifted uneasily in his chair, then slept quietly on.

Edith turned toward her dear dead; she would once more kiss the cold lips, a last farewell, then return to her room.

An appalled scream shivered through the gruesome silence.

The watcher started from his sleep in wild affright, and caught Edith as she fell fainting.

Arthur Lombard was sitting upright, staring about with wondering eyes. Dropping the fainting girl on the nearest sofa, the watcher rang a hurried peal, and hastily dispatched a servant for a physician. He tremblingly approached Arthur, shivering as he laid his hand upon his shoulder; but managed to say soothingly: "Hadn't you best lie down? Arthur looked at him in a bewildered way, seeming not in the least to understand him.

Though trembling in every limb, he gently pressed Arthur backward; who gave a tired sigh, muttered something which the man did not understand, and instantly sank into a refreshing slumber.

A moment later the physician hurried in,

looked wise, felt his pulse, tested his temperature, and said, as though the circumstance was of ordinary occurrence:

"Suspended animation! He will be all right in a few days; get these things off him, and get him into bed as gently as possible; do not let a hint of the preparation for burial reach him; the shock of such knowledge would in all probability actually kill him."

Edith had regained consciousness, and with timid hand touched his sleeve. "You think that he will recover?"

"Certainly! Certainly, Miss Herford! I see nothing to prevent it."

"But he looked and acted so strangely," said Edith tremblingly.

"No doubt! No doubt! So would you or I, placed in the same circumstances. There, there! Run along to bed, I'll stay here the rest of the night, and see that he is all right," gently pushing her through the door as he ceased speaking.

The next morning Arthur awoke feeling comfortably well, but very weak. The physician was sitting beside the bed when he opened his eyes; Arthur regarded him curiously, a puzzled look overspreading his countenance as his gaze wandered about the room. He murmured something strange; receiving no reply, he said slowly, like a child just beginning to talk: "Where am I?"

"In your own bed, of course; where should you be?"

He lay quiet, looking around curiously, as

though everything were new to him. "Why am I here?" still with the same hesitation, as though not certain as to the meaning of his words.

"Where in the mischief would you wish, or expect to be, if not in your own home?" answered the doctor a trifle impatiently.

He looked troubled but asked no more questions; presently he lifted his long, white hand, adorned with a handsome ring, and examined it as though he had never before seen it; he seemed strangely unable to express his feelings.

"Jove!" said the doctor later, "I wonder if the fellow has lost his wits! It is a pity if so, for he was one of the shrewdest of men, and a sharp financier."

If Edith hovered about him, or caressed him with gentle touch, or called him fond names, he looked at her in surprise, and gave not the slightest return.

She would look at him in grieved surprise, and on one occasion asked him with trembling lips: "Do you no longer love me, Arthur?"

"Love you? I—guess—so! I do not know what you mean!" looking helplessly at her.

She burst into tears which were quickly suppressed as she coldly left the room. From that time she offered him no caresses, but he seemed not to notice the omission.

As Edith left the room in anger he looked after her, his brow wrinkled in perplexity.

He was certainly in a strange condition; he appeared to enjoy his meals; he slept well; but he seemed to take no interest in anything more

than that—he did not seem to understand that there was anything in which he ought to take an interest.

One day, as he sat languidly looking out of the window, Gus said to him: "You will soon be well enough to attend to business!"

"What business?" he asked vacantly.

"Why, your banking business of course!" answered Gus in a tone of disgust; he thought his brother must be making a pretence of not understanding. Arthur looked at him blankly but made no reply.

Edith asked the physician: "What do you think of him? Is he insane?"

"No! Neither insane nor idiotic, mental shock! He will recover, he is like a child with everything to learn."

It is hard to tell what were Arthur's sensations; everything seemed to so strange. He was told that these were his rooms; he had no recollection of ever having seen them until the morning when he opened his eyes on the physician's face. Even the language sounded strange to him, though in a hazy way he knew what was meant; it was as though the sounds had been imprinted upon the brain by some other intelligence; as a picture is sensitized upon the plate by one artist for another artist's use. The business so often mentioned to him, seemed like a hazy dream; something of which some other person being cognizant, had conveyed to him in a far-off manner, an impression of his knowledge. In the same way he knew that he was expected to love Edith; but there was a vague,

elusive intuition of some actual affinity, a feeling which he could not shake off, and by which he knew that whatever of feeling he possessed for Edith was as the shadow to the real. This hazy something, which was not knowledge, nor yet a dream, strained his mental capacity in a vain effort after solution. He restlessly tried to gather up the threads of that which seemed to him a new life.

As Gus was vice-president of the bank everything went on smoothly; but he felt greatly annoyed at Arthur's complete indifference when he wished to consult with him upon important business:

"You just manage everything, Gus, until I feel more like business."

"You will have to pull yourself together, old man;" answered Gus, regarding him with troubled gaze.

No sooner had Gus left the room than all signs of languidness disappeared; he muttered angrily to himself; he paced up and down the floor; he tore the books from the shelves in frantic desire for something which would enlighten him on these things which seemed so hazy and bewildering; he threw the book he was holding from him in an excess of rage. Letters and words had a strangely familiar look, and yet—the mental strain was fearful—it was like hunting for faces whose lineaments were long since forgotten; like trying to decipher a faded picture imprinted in dim ink by some person unknown; and feeling, withal, that a perfect understanding of the dim lights and shadows was expected.

That which gave him a still more restless pain was that other tantalizing consciousness which eluded him, though almost touching his memory. Every hour when alone was feverishly employed in trying to recall that which seemed to him like a lost treasure. He listened to every scrap of conversation, he watched the expression of every face, the gestures of every person. A sentence which puzzled him he would repeat over and over again, until he had fixed it firmly in his mind; then the full meaning was hunted out as soon as he was alone.

Edith often looked at him in wondering surprise; he seemed not in the least like the man whom she had loved; it is true the features were the same, but—where was the cultivated ease of manner, where the grace which had been so attractive; the clear, open expression of countenance which had distinguished the man she loved above his fellows? This discontented, rebellious soul looked out from under frowning brows; the brilliant blue eyes had a wary, suspicious look; the movements were awkward, the speech uncouth.

"Oh, Gus, how changed he is!" cried Edith.

"Yes, I scarcely know what to do; if one could but wake him in some way!" said Gus, sadly.

A year or more passed by; as he regained strength he developed strange desires; he absented himself from home for days together.

Edith remonstrated: "Why do you do so, Arthur?"

He answered her coarsely, like an undis-

ciplined youth: "I do not think I need a keeper!"

Edith burst into tears: "I did not mean that; but you know—that—that—I am lonely when you are away," she faltered.

A half-frightened look passed over his face, and was gone instantly, to be succeeded by a perplexed scowl.

"You act as though you owned me!" he said brutally.

Edith regarded him in pained surprise: "Arthur!" The single word expressed much.

He left the house, slamming the door after himself.

He began about this time assuming control of the business; things seemed to go wrong from that hour, and he appeared to have lost all judgment; heavy losses followed in rapid succession. He angrily resented advice, and Gus became so annoyed that he took him to task.

"See here, old man! You are going it a bit wild—you had best check up!"

Arthur's moody eyes lit up with an angry flame: "Any person would think that you had the whole say so," he sneered.

"You know, Arthur, that I have no wish to control, except for the mutual good. Great heaven, Arthur! You are ruining us!" cried Gus, aggravated into speaking his mind.

Arthur looked moodily down, and like a child caught in some misdemeanor, grumbled out: "Any person is liable to make a mistake."

Gus looked at him curiously: "I've a great notion to pull out; I do not propose getting

caught under the wreck when the crash comes," said he angrily.

"Oh, well, get some one to do the work in my place, if you feel so terribly worried," quite as angrily retorted Arthur.

A couple of weeks later Gus did put another man into the office; Arthur seemed rather relieved than otherwise.

Gus was talking to Edith a few days later; they had been speaking of Arthur, and incidentally of Wilbur the new man:

"He seems to understand his business; he has a way of going at it, as though he had been in that office all his life; actually, as he sank into that big, green chair, he sighed with satisfaction."

"Tell me how he looks," said Edith.

"Oh, tall and muscular; his hair is as black as the proverbial crow's wing; the most piercing black eyes that I ever saw; his looks are rather fierce and brigandish, but his manner is most gentle and courteous; his voice is very sweet, the words and tones of a cultured man."

"You make me very curious to see him," answered Edith.

"He interests me strangely; it seems as though I had known him at some former time, but I cannot place him."

"How does Arthur take it?"

"That is strangest of all; he glowers at him as though he hated him mortally; yet he obeys every suggestion of Wilbur's as though he were afraid of him."

Edith did not reply; she was conscious of a

feeling of repulsion toward Arthur, which had been growing in force for the last year; she no longer had the slightest affection for him; if he laid his hand upon her shoulder, even his near proximity would send a shudder through her whole being. She felt ashamed and guilty that such was the case, and tried to conceal the fact. A feverish longing possessed her to see Wilbur; she was also ashamed of this feeling, and mentally took herself to task for the unmaidenly desire.

As to Arthur, everything worried him; he was restless and unhappy; he seemed to have no care as to the success of the business; instead, he burned with a wild desire to throw the money away; anything, any way, so as to be free from care and thought. He had a passionate wish to roam, to get away from the haunts of men into the green woods; to lie on his back and look up at the blue skies, listening to the rustle of the leaves; it smoothed the frown from his moody brow, and seemed to bring that floating affinity nearer his mental vision; at times it came so near that with a cry he would start up and fling his arms wide with a hoarse cry of mad impotence, as it faded delusively. He hated the conventionalities of society; he longed to do someting *outré*, to shock those with whom he came into contact out of their calm; he looked with hatred upon all the refinements of life, as so many limitations, so many bars to personal enjoyment.

Through all the fierce rebellion ran a hazy admonition: "You ought to like these things, it

is expected of you; your position requires it." Accompanying these thoughts like a wierd shadow was that intangible—what was it? A delusion, a dream, or the shadow of a memory?

A few days after Wilbur came, Gus one evening invited him to go home with them: "I wish to introduce you to Arthur's ward, Edith," he said.

"Edith! Edith!" said Wilbur dreamily; "I seem to see her—tall, fair—with the purity of the lily—" He paused, passing his hand over his brow, with a deep sigh.

Gus stared at him in amazement; "Do you know her?" he asked brusquely.

"No! no! I have sometimes dreamed of her, I think; I cannot recall what it is—" again he sighed deeply; he appeared like one awakening from sleep.

Arthur looked at him, his brows bent moodily.

Gus said nothing, but thought to himself; "Well, here is a pair of them!" As they were walking slowly homeward, through the level glow of the sunset, a woman brushed past them; she lifted her face to look at Wilbur, a look in which hate mingled strangely with love. Her eyes were like midnight, but a midnight lighted by a reddish glow, the reflection of the fires within; inky black brows, and hair of the same shade falling low on a forehead as colorless as marble. A face to glow with the fiercest abandonment of love, or burn with the seething fires of hate; her form was of voluptuous beauty, a something strange and foreign in the *ensemble.*

Arthur stopped abruptly, giving vent to a strange, fierce cry:

"Andalusia! Andalusia!" The sound was like the voice of one in anguish. She swept him a burning glance, to which he replied in a strange language, gesticulating rapidly; with a look of wild amazement she passed on, and was lost to sight around a street corner.

Gus looked his displeasure: "I would not stop to talk with one of that kind on the street; who is she?"

Arthur looked at him as though he did not understand, but when the question was repeated, he replied absently:

"No; no; I must have been mistaken!"

Gus of course thought that he was telling an untruth; he judged her some disreputable woman of Arthur's acquaintance. "Oh, it is all right, I do not blame you for being ashamed of it!" he answered sarcastically.

Arthur shot him a look of hatred from under moody brows, but made no reply. Wilbur seemed feverishly eager to reach their destination, and in preoccupied thought had hurried forward until he was considerably in advance of the others, consequently observed nothing.

When Gus introduced Wilbur to Edith, he blushed and stammered awkwardly; she was no less embarrassed. Throughout the whole evening Wilbur scarcely took his eyes from her face; once, inadvertently, he called her Edith; she blushed furiously, and Gus gave him a look of displeasure, which he did not observe.

Later in the evening Gus said to her: "I do

not like Wilbur's familiarity on so short an acquaintance."

Edith hesitated a moment before answering: "I do not think it was intentional, Gus, doesn't he remind you of some other person?"

"Yes; but I can never say who it is."

They turned to look at him, as he sat talking to Arthur; the contrast between the two was very marked. Arthur was slouchingly leaning over the table; his carelessness of attire, an indefinable coarseness of look and action, contrasted most unfavorably with Wilbur's refined manner, the neatness of his person, and the high thought written in characters unmistakable upon his countenance; yet the features of Arthur were far more regular, his physique finer.

Edith sighed. Gus answered her thought.

"Yes; he has changed awfully; I doubt his ever being quite himself again."

"He seems an entirely different person; Mr. Wilbur is much more as Arthur used to be than Arthur himself."

Gus started in amazement: "By Jove! That is so! Ever since he came it has puzzled me to know who he was like."

They had been busying themselves over the tea things as they talked, and now brought them forward. As they sipped their tea Gus endeavored to lead the conversation toward Wilbur's former life, but he plainly evaded the subject. Arthur the whole evening sat moodily gnawing his mustache, or paced the floor restlessly. It was late when Wilbur took his departure.

For a long time Gus could hear Arthur mov-

ing about his room, but at last he sank into dreamy slumber, in which Arthur and Wilbur were strangely intermingled, once starting up wide awake as he fancied he heard the hall door close. He lay a few minutes with every nerve quivering, afraid of—he knew not what; then took himself to task for being so foolish, and again dropped off to sleep.

Arthur did not appear in the morning; but his course was so erratic that this occasioned no surprise; but when a week, two weeks went by without his return, Gus began to be seriously alarmed.

Wilbur proved a treasure; everything went on in the most methodical manner; he seemed to understand every detail of the business; to know where papers and records were kept, of which others had no knowledge; moreover he seemed to enjoy his work.

The residence also, seemed strangely familiar to him; on more than one occasion he surprised them by mentioning articles placed in rooms of which he was supposed to know nothing.

One evening Gus asked him: "Were you ever in that room?"

Wilbur looked bewildered: "I think not—I do not know," he said slowly.

"If not, how do you know where that picture is placed, and the subject of the painting?"

They had been talking of the works of a certain master, and Wilbur mentioned a painting which hung in Arthur's room.

He rested his head upon his hand in an attitude familiar to both; "I do not know; I seem

to see it, that is all that I can tell you," he answered in a sad tone.

Gus looked at Edith questioningly; she did not notice him, her eyes were fixed upon Wilbur.

The next morning as they were sitting down to breakfast, Arthur returned. Edith and Gus rose to their feet, simultaneously; he was dirty, and disheveled, his clothing tattered and soiled; he had the look of a tramp. "Well! You are a sight, and no mistake! Where have you been?" said Gus laughingly.

His appearance was really ludicrous; he tried to pass it off lightly, but a heavy frown belied his flippant manner.

"Who made you your brother's keeper?"

"Really, I do not know who appointed me, but you look as though you were in need of some person to fill that position," retorted Gus.

Half defiantly he replied: "With your kind permission, I'll take some breakfast," tossing his hat on the floor, as he seated himself at the table.

Edith had not spoken, but looked at him in amazement and aversion. Gus laughed derisively: "I say, aren't you forgetting something, old fellow?" laying his hand affectionately on his shoulder.

"What's wrong, now?" looking scowlingly at him.

Gus made no reply in words, but looked significantly at his grimy hands; he frowned still more angrily; jerked himself out of his chair, and went to his room muttering: "Confounded

bore! Mind his own business!" like an untrained, overgrown boy.

Edith could scarcely restrain her tears. "Is it not horrible?" she said with quivering lips.

"Yes it is, but we must overlook it as much as possible; he is to be pitied; he has never been quite right since—" he paused significantly.

"I know! But Gus, it makes me shudder to think of fulfilling my engagement to him; I just cannot—" she paused, a burning blush spreading over her face; she had never before spoken of it to Gus.

He sat thoughtfully toying with his fork for a few minutes:

"Do you think that he wishes it?"

"No, I do not; he never offers me the slightest token of affection, for which I am indeed grateful; truly, I do not believe that he ever thinks of it." She laughed in an embarrassed manner.

"Taking it altogether, Wilbur, Arthur, and—ourselves, it's a queer business."

Edith flushed a fiery red; but if she intended an answer, which is doubtful, Arthur's returning step put an end to the conversation. He at once seated himself at the table, and ate like one famished. A few evenings later Wilbur again came to dinner with Arthur and Gus. The air was very warm and pleasant, and after dinner they all went into the sitting room; the windows opened down to the floor, and were flung wide to admit the sweet, fresh evening air; a long vine-draped porch ran along the whole front of the house.

"Do not have lights, they call the insects, and it is much pleasanter to sit on the porch," said Edith.

Seated there, a strange silence fell over them; the full moon rode through the sky like a stately silver ship; a faint breeze stirred the leaves on the vines, and cast fitful arabesques on the floor; a cricket chirped lonesomely in the grass; dark shadows lay weirdly across the winding walks. Wilbur sat close to Edith, the shadows half enveloping them; in their concealment his hand had sought hers, and clasped it fondly. Arthur sat at the far end of the porch, in the densest gloom; only the fiery tip of his cigar betraying his presence. Gus lay stretched on a wooden settee, his eyes fixed dreamily on a few light, fleecy clouds showing through a break in the vines.

There was a faint rustling sound just where the foliage grew the most dense; the leaves were cautiously parted, and a pallid, vengeful face looked through. The intruder seemed as much surprised as were the group seated there; she had evidently expected to find the porch untenanted, and the sight revealed seemed to drive her to a frenzy of madness; a ray of moonlight fell upon the clasped hands of Edith and Wilbur, also showing the look of devotion upon Wilbur's face, as he was bending toward her in the act of speaking.

There was a flash, the report of a pistol, intermingled with wild screams, and a hoarse, strange cry from Arthur:

"Andalusia! Andalusia!" Then, something

wildly, rapidly spoken in a strange language; the vengeful, defiant air speedily changing to wonder and amazement; tones of fierce remonstrance from him, and scornful disbelief from her; then a word or two of pleading; a light in her eyes like blazing stars, and obeying his fierce gestures she slipped away among the winding walks, shadowy trees and shrubbery.

It has taken some time to tell all this, but the happening was so rapid that none save Gus saw or heard aught that passed between Arthur and the strange woman.

Wilbur was bending over the half-fainting Edith, whispering impassioned words in her ear, caution thrown to the winds on the near approach of danger.

Gus for a moment gazed speechless and motionless, amazed at the fierce gestures, and the strange language; and when he would have detained the woman, Arthur angrily threw him backward, saying: "Let her alone! She made a mistake!"

"A strange mistake, I take it!" hotly replied Gus.

"What is the use of raising more disturbance? No one is hurt! She thought that I was sittiing there beside Edith."

"Suppose you were? Why should she shoot you? It looks very peculiar!" said Gus angrily.

Arthur made no reply, but strode away into the darkness of the shrubbery.

Edith and Wilbur had entered the house, and their low tones, agitated conversation, reached Gus indistinctly as he stood irresolute; he had

sent the servants back to their places, and their frightened tones reached him faintly; after some seconds' indecision he plunged off down the path which Arthur had taken, but no trace of him or the woman could he find.

It was fully an hour before he returned to the house, feeling angry that he was no wiser than when he started; he was the more angry that he did not know what he expected to find. His astonishment was great to find Arthur seated in the self same place smoking as though nothing out of the ordinary had happened.

"Well, I declare! I have been looking everywhere for you;" he said.

"Yes! You have found me, now what will you have?"

It had seemed during the surprise and heat of anger easy enough to ask him what all this mystery meant; but looking Arthur in the face; listening to his cool, sneering tones, it was far from easy; so he hesitated and stammered out: "I don't understand this business at all."

Arthur broke in: "My dear Gus, neither do I."

His tone implied so much more than the words that Gus was effectually silenced.

They soon separated for the night; Wilbur had gone home half an hour before, and Edith had retired to her room, her nerves in a tumult over the occurrences of the evening; but through all the fright and horror ran a thrill of sweetness.

Wilbur had whispered in her ear, as she lay

half fainting: "My love! Do not be frightened; I will protect you!"

"Who could it be? I *am* so frightened!" clinging to his hand.

"It is all past now, dear; I think it must have been some crazy person."

For another week things went on much as usual, except that Gus was now positive that Arthur went out each night at about half-past twelve; not returning until morning, always haggard and worn, and often in the most furious mood. Frequently he glared at Wilbur as though he would like to murder him; but if Wilbur turned, or he knew himself to be observed, his manner changed completely. He seemed anxious to throw Edith and Wilbur together; and yet, as they conversed or sat in silent contentment he would restlessly pace the floor, and finally fling himself out of the room angrily.

Of a sudden he changed entirely; he remained at home of nights, went to the bank early in the morning, and remained until the hour of closing, seemingly intent upon a thorough understanding of every phase of the business, but at times showing such a strange forgetfulness—or ignorance—that Wilbur would pause, and look at him in astonishment.

It was on Wednesday, there were papers missing, relating to some securities; Gus and Authur had been vainly seeking them all the morning; finally Gus went over to Wilbur's desk and asked, more because he was vexed and at a loss as to what to do, than for any other reason:

"Wilbur, do you know anything about those

securities?" mentioning the particular ones he wished.

Without even pausing in his work Wilbur replied, naming the number of the drawer in the security vault where he would find them.

Gus made him no reply, but sought the drawer described, and returned with the papers.

He walked up to Wilbur, followed by Arthur:

"Will you explain to me how you knew where those securities were? After you told where they were, I remember placing them there; and I know that they have not been removed for over a year, long before you came here—" he paused significantly.

Wilbur looked up from his work in complete bewilderment:

"I do not know *how* I know it, but it is all clear to me; the moment you mention a thing I seem to see it, and a long-stored knowledge seems instantly to step forth. I seem to know every crevice in these stones; every bolt, bar and drawer; but how I gained that knowledge I can not tell, because—I do not know."

As he talked he was gazing straight before him, with a strange, unseeing look.

"It is not so strange that you have the knowledge—it is easy to get, if one pokes his nose into everything; but it is hard to understand why I cannot remember anything concerning the business," said Arthur disagreeably.

"It is no use quarreling!" said Gus, but it was evident that he was both puzzled and annoyed.

That night Gus again heard Arthur stealthily

leaving the house, and he did not return until noon of the next day. He remained at the bank from that time until after the hour for closing, remarking that he had correspondence which he wished to finish; having completed it, he called the watchman and sent him to post the letters, saying that he would remain on watch until his return; as soon as he came back, Arthur went home.

He seemed moody and distrait all the evening, and several times Gus caught him glaring at Wilbur with the unmistakable light of hatred in his eyes. Wilbur spent nearly all of his evenings with Edith, and made no secret of his devotion to her. Gus was puzzled to account for Arthur's manner toward Wilbur; that he hated him was very evident, but it certainly was not from jealousy, as he showed not the slightest love for Edith; on the contrary, he appeared actually to dislike and avoid her. Several times during the evening he sank into such gloomy abstraction as not to notice when he was addressed; at an early hour he left the parlor and went to his room, with not even an excuse or a good-night.

Edith looked pained, but Gus was too outspoken to keep silence:

"I do believe that Arthur is going insane; I never saw such a change in any one!"

He was again absent the next morning; but he was away so frequently that no one even spoke of it; but when a week passed without his return Gus began to be vaguely alarmed and suspicious; the reason for the latter feeling

being that Arthur had drawn large sums of money on his personal check within the previous week. Only the day before this last departure he had taken out several thousand dollars.

On his way to his sleeping room that night, Gus, from some impulse unexplainable, tried the door of Arthur's room. He did not know what he expected to discover, he was simply uneasy.

To his surprise he found the door unlocked; heretofore Arthur had been more than careful to keep his privacy secure. Gus entered and turned on the light, everything seemed as usual; he opened the door of the wardrobe, and looked within, it gave him a start to find it empty. Gus turned giddy; had his prediction come true? A prophecy which was born of vexation, instead of insight. Arthur had taken away all of his clothing; no interpretation could be put upon that action, but that he intended to abandon his home; but why should he do so, unless mentally unbalanced?

As he turned to extinguish the light he saw, placed conspicuously on the dresser, a letter; trembling with undefinable fear he caught it up; without address it abruptly commenced:

"When you find this I shall be far away. I have taken five thousand dollars in cash and the diamonds which were in my safe-deposit drawer, which amount to twenty thousand more. The balance of the money and the real estate I have turned over to Wilbur; I hate him, but he has a right to the property.

"You do not understand, and will wonder; I will explain.

"You remember the time when, to all appearances, Arthur Lombard dropped dead; amid great, apparent grief, and much excitement he was carried to this house where he lay silent and motionless for three days.

"At the same instant in which he fell in his elegantly appointed office, almost in the same manner, fell Antoni Petronelli, one of a band of roving gypsies, who dwelt in a fair southern country, with no covering save the waving arms of the forest trees, or at most a house of boughs for shelter at night or in storm. As Edith and Gus mourned over Arthur Lombard, so Andalusia Varana mourned over Antoni—yet not the same—the cool blood of your race cannot realize the fierce love and desperate grief of the untrammeled children of the South.

"At the very instant that Arthur Lombard awoke to life again, that same instant arose as one from the dead, Antoni Petronelli.

"Now comes the really strange, and tragic part of the story. When these two souls were loosed from the body and entered space, they drifted without knowledge of their destination; but that an intelligent power directed them is proved by this; although so far apart, the soul of Arthur Lombard sought the body of the gypsy Petronelli; and the spirit of Petronelli was forced to enter the effeminate body of Arthur Lombard.

"I can speak only of my own impression; I, the soul of the gypsy, Petronelli, and the body

of the aesthetic banker, Arthur Lombard. When I regained consciousness I had but a confused mingling of ideas; some things—impressions, knowledge, thoughts—which had been the property of Lombard, haunted me; it was as though these things had been photographed on the brain, to be brought forth and used by the occupant of the body as occasion required. I did not understand the use of this knowledge; I detested the fair-skinned body; I hated the limitations of his life—which you call refinements; the greatest trial of all was that for a long time I did not know what I was fighting against. I knew only that I was miserably unhappy.

"I hated the soft, cool caresses of Edith; I was tormented with a misty memory—which I could not drive from my mind—of arms which had encircled my neck, and had set my being on fire. I hated the reproof in Edith's calm eyes, and the low voice which grew so cool as I pushed away her hands, or answered her roughly; she was offended in such a grand, cold way. My Andalusia would have upbraided me with hot words, uttered in her shrill, sweet voice; she would have given me blow for blow, then we should have kissed with fond words, and loved better than ever. I hated the house with its elegant furnishings, its heavy, hot carpets, and close, stifling atmosphere.

"I longed for the cool, leafy woods; for the carpet of green grass. I felt an insane desire to crush the globes on the incandescent lights, which parodied the light of the moon; that soft

southern moon, which, with its coterie of stars, looked down upon my bed of boughs while I slept in that happy time before disaster came.

"For a long time I could not put these feelings into words, or even into thoughts; I knew only that these things I hated, and I madly desired to get away; it was like the restlessness of some caged animal. During all of this time those teachings which had left their impression upon the brain matter tortured me, suggesting and urging other thoughts so at variance with those rebellious feelings that it almost drove me mad.

"Then when Wilbur came it seemed as though my soul must leap out of the hateful body which held it in limitation. Instantly I recognized my own, my hands have many times itched to throttle the usurper of my person, so that I might seize that which belonged by right to me. Oh, how I hate this milk-and-water flesh! These soft muscles, and dainty palms!

"With his coming—Wilbur, by the way, is but an assumed name—it seemed to give that hazy sense of something gone before, something half remembered, like a dream of the night—a shock. I concentrated every effort of my being until scenes from my former life began to float before my mental vision; dense woods, with leaves of a glossy, dark green; lilies standing tall and white; a great bay of water reflecting the blue of a cloudless sky and the green of the trees on its placid bosom. There was ever the vague shadow of a form which filled my veins with fire, and my whole soul with longing, but

it floated just beyond my mental grasp. Many a time as I walked under the stars I could have cried aloud, it seemed so near, and yet—eluded me I could not remain within the walls of that elegantly furnished room which was called mine; so at night I wandered far, and lay on the cool, dew wet grass, and strove to solve the tormenting problems.

"That evening when Andalusia followed us, I had been more than usually unsettled and troubled; there was a softness in the atmosphere; a mellow light shed by the descending sun; a faint, odorous stirring of the warm wind, which made my brain throb as though it would burst, so suggestive were all things of that half remembered southern land. When Andalusia brushed past us, and the light of her eyes entered my soul, the final knowledge came to me, as had that other; I remembered all, and in a transport of joy I called out her name. It was well for *him* that I cried out—my body would have been a vacant tenement otherwise; but unless I also was released from this hateful bondage it would have been useless, as I could not, unless through the same condition which at first existed, have reclaimed my own.

"Andalusia sought Wilbur, thinking herself deserted by me; she was mad with jealousy long before he fled; she frightened him with her ardent love, and I suppose when angered repelled him by her wild bursts of passion; his cold nature could not appreciate the tropical love of my Andalusia.

"That evening on the street, when I cried out

'Andalusia,' she recognized my voice, but thought it some trick to deceive her; you know that in our land, and especially among our people, there are many incredible and wonderful things done to cheat the imagination; but when I said in Romany, which seemed to drop from my tongue without my will: "Be at the entrance of the park to-night at twelve; I, your Antoni, will meet you;" she swept me a burning gaze of wondering doubt, and disappeared. I met her as I promised, but could not convince her that I spoke the truth; she scornfully taunted me with the eyes, which she declared that I had stolen from the summer sky, an open page whereon to print all my baby passions; she lifted herself to look over my head, and mock me with her shrill laughter; one thing only consoled me; I knew when she promised again to meet me, that though she derided, she was not quite sure. It seemed that Wilbur—Ugh! I cannot call him Petronelli—he has no right to the name, he stole my body, but—I am I, in spite of it! Well, he utterly refused her love; he resisted her caresses, and showed such unmistakable aversion that he drove her wild; she upbraided him fiercely, and —like a coward—he fled from her.

"What led him here? Was it the hand of the All Wise, or the homing instinct implanted in man? He came, and you know how he filled the place, and how perfectly the place fitted him.

"For long weeks I failed to convince Andelusia; weeks that were filled with the madness of despair, with the agony of vain pleading, of being scorned and taunted with my baby skin, until

every time that I looked at Wilbur, I could scarcely restrain my hands.

"Andelusia watched his every movement; that night when she fired the pistol she thought that she had found her rival, and had she been less angry would have killed her; her emotion, only, rendering her hand unsteady.

"I followed her and appointed a place of meeting; at first she would not listen, but finally consented; saying that old Martini Sistine was with her, hidden in the shubbery. I was rejoiced, for old Martini knows much that is hidden from all the rest of the world; she can talk familiarly with those who have departed this life; and to her the stars are as an open book. Martini knew that I spoke the truth, and in trying to convince Andalusia she also explained much which I had been unable to grasp. Andalusia at first would hear nothing of it, but cried scornfully, touching the fair hair as though it were some vile thing, and prodding my flushed cheek viciously:

"'*This* is not my Antoni!' Then said Martini severely:

"Daughter of the South, born in the wildwood among nature's sweetest mysteries, do you doubt the first one which touches you? For shame! If you saw a branch lopped off the tree under which you sat, would you cry out that this was no longer the same tree? If you should lose your fair right arm, are you not still Andalusia? If you were bereft of both limbs and arms, and nothing but the disfigured trunk remained, you would still be Andelusia. It is the

Within, which is in reality the personality. Your Antoni is the same, but he is unfortunate in having to bear this effeminate body; have you no pity for his misfortune?"

"Then my Andalusia wept on my neck, and begged forgiveness for all her unkind words; and though she cried continually: 'Poor Antoni!' I was so happy that for a time I forgot all about my hateful body.

"We are going to our own land; Martini, my Andalusia and I. Wilbur can take the cool-blooded Edith and welcome; their placid imitation of love is like ice to fire as compared to the glorious tumult of passion which swells in the hearts of the unfettered children of the free wild-wood.

"I have taken this money and the diamonds, yet—I am no thief! That portion of myself, known to the sight as Arthur Lombard—the hateful body, thrust upon me without my consent—I am compelled to retain against my will; that body has a right to maintenance, and I have taken of Arthur Lombard's money to care for it. I have left the balance to the soul of Arthur Lombard; and as a last request, I ask him to be kind to the body of poor, cheated Antoni Petronelli."

LIMITATIONS.

A BROWN faced, tangle-haired, barefooted little girl; a long country road, its yellow clay beaten into powder, which rose with every gust of wind into whirling eddies, and spitefully enveloped each passer-by in a grimy cloak, and followed after each vehicle like an abhorrent specter. Long rows of maple cast their cool shadows from either side; raspberries and blackberries grew in the corners of the old rail fence; a narrow footpath cut like a yellow thread into the thick green sod; here and there a sweet-william held up its fragant head; and in the field beyond the long rows of corn rustled their broad leaves, and murmured together.

Thella swung her sunbonnet by the strings, and gave a little hop-skip-and-jump for very joy of living. She stopped instantly, as she heard, "Thella! Thella!" called in a fretful, rasping tone.

"Yes'm," answered she, at the top of a high-pitched, young voice, as she ran rapidly toward a stout, red-faced woman, who stood leaning over the top of the gate.

"I declare to goodness, you make me think of a turkey! It's no wonder that you are the ugliest young one living! Look at that mop of

hair, and that slit in your dress!" said she, her voice raised to a shrill scream.

Thella dropped her head, and drew her black brows together sullenly. "Why don't you put that sunbonnet on your head? Oh, drat you, get out of my sight, you little imp!"

Thella had been digging one brown toe in the dust, but at the conclusion of the tirade she darted past the woman, dextrously dodged a blow and ran into the house. She flew upstairs into the attic; there was a little square window, draped over with cobwebs; Thella had rubbed the grime off the lower panes, but she left the cobwebs—she called them her curtains, and the spiders her little lace makers. From out the rubbish she had long ago hunted a mirror, with a very wavy surface. She crouched on the floor with her head bowed upon the window-sill, sobbing bitterly; the most forlorn little thing imaginable.

Her stepmother's voice faintly reached her:

"Thella! Thella! Drat the child! she'd wear the patience out of a saint!" whether she inyended to imply that she was a saint or not, I do not know.

Thella only gave a little flout: "You can split your old throat for all that I care."

Anger dried her tears; she softly crept across the loose boards of the floor, and brought her looking-glass to the window. She sat looking at herself mournfully; it was not a pretty picture upon which she gazed; a grimy, tear-stained face, as brown as a coffee-berry, heavy black eyebrows, arched over a pair of intense gray eyes;

the wavy glass had a trick of elongating the visage which made it very comical; added to this, her hair hung like a black cloud all about her face. She threw down the glass in disgust:

"Thella Armitage, you do look like a little Indian! Oh, what shall I do?" her chin beginning to quiver again; but presently she rested her face on her hand, and sat gazing at the fleecy clouds chasing each other across the sky, and wandered off into dreamland; these were her soldiers, and the great white cloud with a rose colored border was her chariot, and she was going:

"Thella! Thella Armitage! If you don't come down here and wash these dishes I'll skin you," called her stepmother, up the stairs.

"All right, maybe a decent skin would grow on then," muttered Thella. She went down into the hot kitchen and washed the dishes; but every minute she stole a glance at her pretty clouds through the open window. "What are you gawping at? 'tend to your work," said Mrs. Armitage crossly. She did not mean to be actually unkind, but she had no appreciation of another's feelings, much less of Thella's dreamy, poetic temperament. Thella shot her an angry look, and sullenly went on with her work, the beauty all taken out of the clouds, her fairylike day dreams buried in gloom.

No sooner were the dishes washed than Thella was set to knit her stint; oh, how she hated that interminable stocking! The rounds seemed endless; and if she thought about something nice for just one little minute the stitches would

drop and run away down; then Mrs. Armitage would angrily yank the stocking out of her hand, pull the needles out, and ravel out all her evening's work. When at last the hateful task was accomplished, and the old clock sitting in its little niche in the wall—like a miniature shrine for the Virgin Mary—rang out its nine slow strokes, she would run up to the old east chamber where she slept, in an agony of stifled rage.

Mrs. Armitage would allow her only a small bit of candle: "You're not going to read those good-for-nothing books; you jest go to bed and go to sleep; I want you to be fit for something in the morning."

So she was forced to hurry in between the sheets, after blowing out the light, often to lie there wakeful; dreaming such lovely, impossible dreams by the hour. On moonless nights the skurry of a rat, or the cracking of the old timbers in cold weather, would send little shivers creeping up and down her back; but when the silvery moon shone in at the curtainless window she would lie wide-eyed, riding to strange, unheard of countries on its silver bars.

One happy day a neighbor loaned her the "Arabian Knights;" she hurried through her tasks, which were neither short nor easy, and ran joyously up to the garret; a pane of glass had been broken, and a pewee had flown in and built her nest in an old basket suspended from the rafters. So careful was Thella not to frighten the mother bird, that she fearlessly sat on the window sill and called to her four little children: "Phebe! Phebe!"

Thella rested her chin on her hand thoughtfully:

"I don't see how you know them apart if they are all named Phebe," said she.

She was far away in an enchanted land with Alladin, and did not hear Mrs. Armitage creep up to her; the first intimation she had of her presence was an awful blow on the ear which made her see stars, and knocked the book half across the room.

"You lazy, trifling trollope! I'll learn you to spend your time reading such trash. Now you march downstairs, and if you can't find anything else to do go out in the garden and weed them onion beds," saying which she pounced viciously upon the book.

"Pa said I need not weed them until the sun went down, and it got cooler," faltered Thella.

"Your father is learnin' you to be as lazy as he is himself," snapped Mrs. Armitage; "you march, now, and no more of your sass."

Thella rose and pushed back her heavy hair, preparatory to following her.

"Will you please let me put away the book?" she said.

"I'll please put it in the fire," she replied viciously.

"Oh, no, no! Don't it isn't mine!" she cried frantically as she made a vain endeavor to reach it.

Mrs. Armitage gave her another resounding slap: "There, take that, you little cat!"

As she commenced descending the stairs Thella darted before her, and hurriedly ran to

the field to her father; she caught hold of his hands and pulled the hoe away from him.

"Don't daughter, ma will be mad if I don't keep to work," he said pathetically.

"Oh, pa, I'll hoe in your place; do go and take my book away from her, she's going to burn it, and it isn't mine at all; it's Willie Burt's!" she cried in agitated incoherence. "Oh, hurry, pa! Don't let her burn it," her voice full of tears. He stooped for one instant and laid his hand caressingly upon her head.

"Poor little Thella," he murmured, then walked hurriedly up to the house. Thella looked after him sorrowfully:

"Poor pa!" she said, with a quiver in her voice.

Presently he came slowly back through the broiling sunshine and took the hoe from her hand.

"Well?" said Thella interrogatively.

He shook his head: " 'Twasn't no use, she had it in the stove."

"The mean, old thing—" began Thella.

"Tut-tut; she's your mother," said pa gently.

"She isn't *my* mother; my little mother is dead!" She began very hotly, but ended with choking sobs.

"I wouldn't cry, little daughter; we must make the very best of things when we can't change them," he said with a sad resignation more pathetic by far than tears. He took his old red bandana from his pocket and wiped the drops from her flushed cheeks, compassionately.

"Well! You are the shif'lesses pair I ever did

see," said Mrs. Armitage shrilly. "Thella, if you don't go at that onion bed I'll take a strap to you."

Thella gave her a look of bitter hatred, and walked sullenly to her work. The sun beat down with terrible force; Thella knelt unprotected on the edge of the bed, and pulled the offending weeds; her father hoed the long rows of corn steadily, only pausing to wipe away the perspiration as it trickled down his face. Mrs. Armitage, under the shade of an apple tree whose boughs bent low with yellow fruit, gossiped with a neighbor.

"Pa! pa!" called Thella softly, he paused and looked at her. "Can't I have an apple? I'm so warm and thirsty."

Low as was the call, Mrs. Armitage heard it; " 'Tend to your work; you always want to be chankin' something. Warm! it's just nice and pleasant."

Pa dropped his hoe between the long rows, and gathering half a dozen apples off the tree, called Thella to him: "It is nice and cool here, under the shade of the tree."

He sat on the green bank, and took his little daughter on his knee; he pushed the thick hair from her warm face; she ate her apple, her head lying contentedly on her father's shoulder. Mrs. Armitage went on gossiping with the neighbor, interspersing her remarks with flings about "People too lazy to breathe—humoring that good-for-nothing," etc. If Pa Armitage heard, he made no sign, beyond pressing his arm a little closer about Thella's waist.

Time went on. Thella was fourteen; her life was a horrible routine—up before dawn in the winter, and before the sun in summer, to milk and churn, cook and scrub; no thoughts expressed in her hearing except those relating to eating, working, and the continuous bad conduct of the neighbors—this last always sufficient for a whole day's tirade. In summer it was not so bad; there were always the whispering trees, and the fragrant flowers; the green grass, and the busy booming of the bumble bees; the lowing of the solemn-eyed cows, that came at her call. Best of all was the walk down the long, shady lane, through the grassy dell, where, in the limpid brook, the funny crabs crawled backward; and the saucy, gray squirrel chattered at her from the beech and chestnut trees on the hillside; still an added joy when "pa" followed his little girl, telling her of his coming by putting his crooked little finger in his mouth, and thus whistling shrilly. Fast as her nimble feet could carry her she ran to him, and nestling her hand in his begged him to tell her of her very own mamma. Oh, the delightful walks and talks; the sun hanging low in the west and the soft wind just stirring the leaves; a little later the softly falling dew, the gathering shadows, a belated bird hopping from branch to branch with drowsy chirp; a rabbit darting across the path, causing Thella to glance over her shoulder in quick affright and cling a little closer to "pa's" hand at sight of the dark shadows all around her; then the great red moon lifting his round face above the treetops, lighting up the

openings, and leaving the shadows darker by contrast. The sweet silence seemed deepened by the shrill cry of the cicada, and the plaintive call of the whip-poor-will; at last pa would say, "We must hurry home, we shall get a scolding."

Thella would sigh and answer: "Yes, pa, but this is so nice," with a loving cuddle closer to his side.

Well they knew the remark Mrs. Armitage was sure to make about their "trapezing" all over the fields.

Not long after this, all through the day Thella had been working very hard, and in the edge of the evening sat down on the porch to rest. Pa had just come in from the field looking worn-out; Thella's heart ached as she looked at him: "Poor pa, you are tired out," she said.

"Yes, pretty tired, daughter!" he answered; hearing Mrs. Armitage coming they said no more.

She was in a fearful humor; she had quarreled with one of the neighbors, and seemed to think that the fight extended to her own family. It was quite dark on the porch, and Thella sat in the shadow so that she did not observe her.

"Where is Thella?" she angrily asked of pa, as she came in.

"Not very far away, I guess," he answered mildly.

"Out trapezing somewhere, I suppose! I seen her whispering to that Judd Tompkins, more'n once; she'll come to no good, I'll tell you!"

"Sho! Sho! What's the use of bein' so hard,

ma? Didn't you never talk to the boys when you was young?" asked pa very mildly.

"I wish to goodness I'd never seen a pesky man; of all the shif'less, onery things a man's the wust; and you're about the laziest of the whole bilin'."

Pa made no reply, but Thella rose up, white and wrathful; it is not the great things which rouse us to the depth of feeling, but the continued pin-pricking; the nag-nagging which drives us to desperation. Thella could take anything directed against herself; she thought many times that she had grown so used to it that it did not hurt much, but pa, poor pa, she could not hear the good patient soul nagged so, without a word of protest.

"You just let pa alone! You can abuse me all you like, but you needn't misuse him on my account, he is not to blame for my shortcomings;" she sidled up to him, and clasped his arm with her two hands.

"Hoity-toity! I'm glad I have your permission to express my feelings to you, my high-flown miss; and with or without your consent, I'll say what I please to your pa—you little trollope, you!"

She made an angry dive at Thella, who only threw up her arm and warded off the blow: "You had best not strike me," she said in a peculiarly quiet tone.

"Come away, come away, daughter; don't quarrel with her. Make the best of it! We can't seem to alter things, so let's make the best of it," said the old man tremulously.

Thella was trembling with anger; she realized that she had made it worse for pa instead of helping him, and her heart was filled with regret and bitterness.

"Pa, you don't have to endure such abuse; set your foot down and make her behave herself."

"Oh, Thella, I couldn't! Don't you see, daughter, that I can't quarrel with a woman? Let us take a walk down the lane," and hand in hand they went. Nothing further was said on the subject until they turned to go in; pa drew a long sigh: "I wish your ma had a lived, but I made my bed—" he broke off abruptly, then continued in a trembling tone, "I thought I was doing the best for my little girl to give her a new ma—you see, a man that's had a good wife is lonely, and beside, he don't know just what to do for a little girl—and I thought—I thought—" the old voice quavered into silence piteously.

Thella stopped short and laid her hands upon his shoulders affectionately: "Yes, I know—dear pa, you are so kind; but pa—you are mistaken—you are not making the best of it; there is no good at all in this way of living; it's just slavery for the bite you eat, and a bed to sleep in—that's full of thorns; even your food is thrown at you as though you were a dog, and where are all the books we used to have? One might as well be a fool, if they can have no use for their brains," she ended bitterly.

"Yes; she's put all the books away; I'm afraid she's burned them. Your ma liked books, Thella; we used to take such comfort reading to-

gether, but Mandy says it makes me lazy—p'raps it does. Mandy is a wonderful manager, Thella."

"Very wonderful! She can make everybody else work while she gossips with the neighbors," answered Thella indignantly.

"Sho, sho! Daughter you mustn't talk that way! She's your ma—no, she's your stepma, you know. We must make the best of it," he iterated weakly. Thella made no reply, though her heart burned hotly; what could she say to this crushed spirit that would not add to his trouble?

Before she let him go in she said hesitatingly; "Pa, I am going away; she is cross to you on my account, and—and—oh, pa, I do want to go to school; there's so much that I want to know!" she said breathlessly.

He stood as though stunned: "What shall I do without you?" he cried despairingly.

Thella trembled with excitement; her heart was torn between the desire to go and the longing to remain; how could she leave her poor, heartbroken old father? but—she honestly believed that *she*—Thella never called her anything else if she could avoid it—would be less unkind to pa, if she were gone. Thella knew very well that a rancorous jealousy added force to her misuse of him; and—oh, she could not go on in this way; empty day dreams no longer sufficed her bright intelligence; she hungered and thirsted for knowledge; he had a vague understanding of higher and better things than met her everyday sight. She could no longer

keep her eyes earthward; even when she cast them down for one instant, all things spoke to her of that higher life, and filled her with unutterable longing. Something of this she tried to tell pa between her sobs.

He let his hand wander gently over her crown of hair, as he said, "Yes—yes, daughter; I know how you feel. I used to have just such thoughts, and ma—your ma—used to make me feel as though I could see right up into God's heart, and I knew—I *knew*—that I could live well enough to reach Him, sometime, I should if ma hadn't have died; but now—I just have to make the best of it," he finished despondently.

"But pa, hadn't you ought to try now—for ma's sake?"

"How can I? I never have time even to think. No, no, daughter, I must just make the best of it," he reiterated wearily.

She had no words of comfort that had not in them a sound of mockery, so she said nothing beyond thanking him for his consent, and as she kissed him lovingly, she patted his withered cheek with her toil-roughened palms: "Poor pa! Poor pa! I love you dearly," she said.

A tear stole down his furrowed face and wet her hands; he tremblingly murmured, "God bless my daughter!"

The next morning Mrs. Armitage screamed in vain to Thella:

"Drat her, I'll take a strap to her, if she's biggern the side of a house."

When at last she threw open the door of the poor, bare little chamber, she found it empty.

For once words failed her—she sat down on the stairs gasping.

Pa wisely kept out of her way. She missed her servant, but poor pa went about more silent than ever; it seemed that in one short month he grew visibly gray and bent; he worked on hopelessly through heat and cold. The only smile that ever crossed his face was when he received a thick letter from the village postmaster; he would hide it away in his inside pocket with trembling hands for fear Mandy would see it; a little spot of color coming into his thin old cheeks at the thought; at nightfall he would wander down the lane where he used to walk with Thella, and just to make believe that she would come to meet him, he would crook his little finger and whistle shrilly. Oh, the comfort those letters were to him; after reading them over and over again, he would hide them away in a hollow log.

Thella always wrote to him that she was well and happy; she told him nothing of the hard labor and bitter disappointments she met; her situation had been assured to her before she left home, but there were many things that were hard to bear; not the least of which was a terrible homesickness. Then, too, when she came to go to school, she found that others of the same age were far in advance of her in their studies, and consequently looked down upon her. Patient effort at last brought success; by this time her homesick feeling had worn away; she still longed to see her father, but had ever the hope before her of a home in which "pa"

should have the warmest corner in winter and the brightest window when he wished it.

Later on she wrote that she was teaching; pa whispered it softly to himself: "My Thella is a schoolmam!" Such innocent pride as pa took in the fact.

After four years she wrote to him that she was married.

"Married! My little girl, married!" His old face puckered up queerly; he did not know whether to laugh or cry. She wrote that she was very happy. After that the burden of every letter was, "Pa, do come and see me."

Sitting by the fire one evening, late in the fall, pa said, "Mandy, I am gong to Adairville to-morrow."

"I should like to know if you are possessed, you'll do no such thing! What do you want to go there for?"

"I want to see Thella; it's a long time since I seen her!" deprecatingly.

"Well, you won't go trapezing after her; she run away, and you'll not follow her."

"She's my child, you hadn't ought to be so hard, Mandy," quavered the old man.

"Well, you'll not go, I tell you! you ain't goin' to spend no money running after that trollope!" answered she.

Pa sighed, but said no more; he had submitted to her rule so long that the thought of opposition did not occur to him; his shoulder seemed to bend as if beneath a heavy load; his gray head drooped lower and lower; a heavy

tear or two followed the deep furrows down his cheek.

The next morning he seemed scarcely able to stir, and though her wrath enveloped him all day he seemed not to mind; he appeared like one in a dream.

When chore-time came again, she said sharply, "Ain't you goin' to get them cows to-night? you act as though your wits was wool-gatherin' —or like a tarnal fool!"

"Mandy, I've always did the best I could!" he said quaveringly, as he turned away.

"It's poor enough, the Lord knows," snapped she.

When pa reached the entrance to the lane he stood lost in thought for several minutes—he had forgotten all about the cows—suddenly he straightened up: "I've a good mind to do it! I vum, I will!" he laughed outright—a cracked, cackling laugh, that had a pitiful sound; his weak, watery eyes began to glisten; this time instead of whistling once, he whistled twice shrilly.

"Daughter, I'm coming; your old pa's coming!" he cried gleefully.

He sat down on the hollow log where he kept his letters; he took them out, handling them over fondly; from the last one received he drew out a bill; he spelled the letter out laboriously:

"Dear Pa: Here is a little money to get you a suit of new clothes; and in my next letter I will send you enough for your fare, for, dear pa, I must see you."

He laid the letter on his knee, smoothing it caressingly.

"Yes, daughter, so you shall; I couldn't never wait 'till I got another letter; so I will go just as far as this money'll carry me and I'll walk the rest of the way. Lord! What'll Mandy say?"

Poor pa did not know as much about traveling as do some children, so he had very little idea of his undertaking.

Two weeks later Thella was one afternoon sitting in her pleasant room. The postman had just passed, which set her to wondering why she did not hear from pa; she ever had the dread before her that his burden would become greater than he could bear, and that she would see him no more. A servant came hurriedly into the room:

"Mrs. Webster, there is an old man at the door who insists upon seeing you; I think he is crazy, he acts so queer."

"Where is he?" asked Thella, rising.

"At the front door, where he has no business to be, of course! Oh, he said tell you that his name is Armitage——"

"Oh, it is pa—it's pa!" cried Thella, wildly oblivious that she had nearly thrown the astonished girl over.

She seized the toilworn hands of the forlorn-looking old man; she threw her arms around his sunburned neck, and hugged him ecstatically; she fairly dragged him into the room, so great was her excited joy; she pulled forward the easiest chair, and playfully pushed him into it;

she patted his hands, and kissed his snowy, straggling hair; she had no words to express her joy, grief, and surprise, except to say over and over again, "Poor pa! Poor pa! Oh, I am so glad to see you!"

He looked at her with dim old eyes, his shaking hand held in hers: "Is this pretty lady my little daughter?" he asked with a happy laugh.

"Oh, you awful flatterer," cried Thella gayly.

Pa leaned back in his chair with a sigh of satisfaction: "This chair is awful comfortable," he closed his eyes wearily.

"You are tired, pa, and I do not let you rest!" she said with quick compunction.

"Yes, I am tired; it was a long walk. Mandy wouldn't let me come, so I ran away; I wouldn't quarrel with her, so I had to make the best of it."

"Walk! Did you walk?"

"'Most a hundred miles; it took me a long spell, but I'm glad I come. When I shut my eyes it seems as though I'm talking to your ma; your voice sounds just as hers did."

The next morning when Thella went to call him to breakfast, he lay babbling of the green lane and Thella, his little girl; occasionally crying out piteously, "Don't be so hard, Mandy; she's only a little girl!" Then again, tears would course down his worn cheeks: "Oh, if ma had only lived!" Another time: "Yes, daughter; it is hard to bear, but we must make the best of it."

It was a whole month later, and pa was lying back in an invalid chair, his head propped with

soft cushions, his old face looking very placid. "What a sight of nice books you have, daughter; it would be a pleasure to stay here all my life!"

"That's just what you are going to do, pa."

"Oh, I can't! You know how Mandy will scold, but I'm goin' to take all the comfort I can, while I do stay."

Thella leaned over him, smoothing his thin, gray hair as though he were a child, a wistful tenderness in her tone:

"Mandy'll never scold you again, pa."

Pa sat upright, a fitful color coming into his thin cheeks: "What do you mean? Has—something—" stammered he, nervously.

"There, pa, don't fret; yes, Mandy is—dead;" caressing the hand she held tenderly. "She took a severe cold, and was sick only three or four days." A tear coursed down his cheek:

"Poor Mandy! Perhaps she didn't mean to be so hard; we mustn't judge for others, must we, now?" he questioned tremulously.

He sat silent for a long time, at last he said, "You've everything nice here, and the best man that ever lived; you've learned so many things—I don't 'spose you would care to walk in the old lane where my *little* girl and I used to walk; but I should like to see it once more, and then I'd be content to stay with you the rest of my days."

Thella gave his hand a loving little pat: "Just hurry up and get well, and we will go and make believe that it is old times once more."

It was months before pa was able to go, but at

last they walked down the lane in the sweet June twilight; as of old, "bob-white" whistled to his shy brown mate; and the gray rabbit lifted his long ears inquiringly, exactly as in the past; the yellow buttercups laughed up amid the short, sweet grass just the same, and yet Thella felt a depressing sadness, and pa sighed sorrowfully: "One kind of gets used to things, Thella —no need to hurry home now, is there? It makes me sorry and lonesome." Thella pressed his arm sympathetically, and they silently walked up the lane, past the cows, ruminatively chewing their cud; past the flock of chickens, with their many bickerings, as they sought their roost; past the silent house and into the street, closing the gate softly and reverently behind them, even as they closed the door of the past life.

A TALE OF TWO PICTURES.

It is a question open to discussion whether it is a blessing to be born with a highly sensitive organization, an artistic taste—and poverty.

The reverse was the opinion of Philip Aultman. Life seemed a failure, every venture foredoomed; and this sunny June morning, when all nature seemed to give the lie to evil prognostications, he sat in his room with the curtains of his soul pulled down, brooding over his misfortunes, not once considering that he was in fault. A maple grew just outside the window, and a little branch tapped on the uplifted sash coaxingly; the soft wind whispered through its branches, and entering lifted his curly brown locks shyly; a bluebird tilted its bright head, and swelled its throat in song of enticement; he lifted his face from the melancholy arch of his arms, and said as if in answer to the appeal: "I *will* go out, this is of no use! Anything is better than staying within brooding over my trouble!"

As he wandered about the sweet wind seemed to blow away much of his despondency, although he still smarted with indignation against fate. Yet—what is fate? The evil we bring upon ourselves. We clasp our hands above our heads,

prostrate ourselves with our foreheads in the dust, and say with the devout Oriental: "Kismet!" Thus we are absolved from all blame.

Philip had been poor all his life; not miserably indigent, though many things which go to make life comfortable were lacking. He had inherited a taste for art from his father; hard work had been the rule of his life, and as a result he was a very creditable artist, though not by any means entering into the soul of the work. It is one thing to paint a fair picture, to write an acceptable story; it is quite another thing to put your very self into your work, and endow it with a subtle life which is past all explaining.

When he was twenty-five he inherited money —worse for him; he thought that henceforward life held no need for exertion; as though food and raiment constitute all for which we should exert ourselves. He fancied that happiness lay in two things; going to sleep, and letting the enervating wind of pleasure drift him whithersoever it would; or getting astride of the billow of self-will, to ride over everything. He did not find his mistake until slice by slice his inheritance had been cut away from him, and he looked with astonished gaze upon those who, under the guise of friendship, had fastened themselves upon him in his prosperity, and now stared at him with unseeing eyes. He looked upon it as the worst misfortune which could have befallen him. He was no more shortsighted than the majority of persons; because a certain condition brings present discomfort, we rebel against it as being to our great detriment; most frequently

we rebel without reason. The loss was a blessing to him, against which he railed, beat, and bruised himself.

Just at this point I take up his history.

He wandered about the woods all day, sometimes throwing himself on the grass to look up into the immeasurable depths of the ether; again, idly throwing pebbles into the flashing water; but during all that sweet, restful afternoon his soul was awakening from its lethargy; thoughts which seemed to him a glimpse of the divine, surprised his hitherto dormant intellectuality; he began to realize that life held possibilities of which he had never caught a glimpse.

Evil is but good gone astray; it is the oscillation of the pendulum; Philip had reached the adverse limit, and the pendulum of its own momentum was returning to the center of gravity. As deadly nausea is the precursor of a cleansed stomach, so he felt a thorough disgust with all the world, which meant to him—as it does to every one of us—the people with whom he was in daily association; he indignantly compared them to a flock of geese—all gabble and greed. It is a hard truth, that if we will submit to be plucked we can soon find all the worst characteristics of the worst people. He thought savagely that he desired never to see one of them again.

He took a small memorandum book from his pocket, and setting down a few figures ran them over rapidly; he laughed harshly, a sound that held the threat of a sob: "Six hundred dollars! Well, that is a great showing from fifty thousand! No wonder the elegant Mabel DeVere

gave me the cold shoulder; she and her kind have no use for a man without money; then there was that little dancer—she had no further use for the goose after it was thoroughly plucked, as she took pains to tell me; she was at least honest. They are all alike, a treacherous, tricky lot!" he muttered to himself, with moody brow; but he remembered with a pang of shame that his loving, patient, helpful mother had been like none of those with whom he had associated, and his shame was that he had sought such company; it had been of his own choosing; what better was he, that he should fling at them? He was looking at himself in a new light.

He tried not to think about it, it made him restless and ashamed; but such thoughts once aroused will not be quieted; when the light is once admitted the germ of higher growth will strengthen rapidly.

"How sweet it would be to live like this," he said thoughtfully. A sudden smile lighted the gloom of his face; "Why not? I have my outfit, and money enough to procure food and shelter whenever I desire it. It is not so very much that a person needs after all; it is what he fancies that he needs, and is much better without, that takes the money—and what his friends require," he added with a rueful grimace.

In consequence of this determination, he took a small gripsack, together with his artist's materials, and tossed the key of his room to his landlady, saying nonchalantly, "Take care of my things; I'll be back sometime!"

No person can live near to nature's heart, can

share in her moods, and drink of her healing waters, and not grow purer in heart, and stronger spiritually. Philip began to lose the sense of discord, and to understand, with a feeling of humility, that he had been in fault; it was well for him to live with himself for awhile, that he might learn what kind of a man he had really been.

Toward the close of a cloudless July day he came up a long, grassy, country lane, to a squat looking farmhouse; he had come across country many miles, and had found a strange charm in the solitude. He was tired and hungry, and hailed a sight of the house with pleasure. The whole place had a wild and deserted look; a few late roses hung their heavy heads from the unpruned bushes; creepers ran riot over a long, low porch extending around three sides of the house giving it the appearance of a mother hen protecting her brood.

As he assayed to open the rickety gate the tangled morning-glorys seemed to hold it closed against him as though in warning. A vision of supper and a bed with cool, sweet-scented sheets had possessed his mind; but as the gate creaked on its one rusty hinge and he felt the desolation of the place, a chill went over him and the comforting vision disappeared.

A hollow, uncanny reverberation was the only answer to his rapping. He turned the knob, which yielded readily to his touch, but the door swung slowly on it rusty hinges; stiffly like a person old and tortured with the rheumatism. He stood undecided, peering in among the

shadows of a long, dimly lighted hall, which extended the whole length of the house, the doors opening primly on either side along its entire length; plainly no foot had disturbed the dust on this floor for many a day. As he stepped within a cloud arose as though in protest; he opened the first door on the right, and was surprised to find the room furnished; the low-browed ceiling seemed to frown ominously; the sides were paneled in dark wood, being alternately the head of an animal and a flower, exquisite in design and workmanship; but the dark mahogany color added to the somber effect. A square old-fashioned bedstead stood at the far corner of the room, its tall spindling posts rising high toward the ceiling like uplifted hands; on one of these hung a man's hat. Phil fancied that he could see the kind of a man who had worn it; an athletic fellow, not over nice in his dress, judging by its battered look. The clothing on the bed was pulled awry, as though the occupants had hurriedly stepped out, without time to arrange the room; an easy-chair was drawn up before the great, yawning fireplace, in which a few charred sticks lay across the old fashioned, brass andirons. On the mantle stood a brass candlestick, with a half-burned candle in the socket; a pair of snuffers on a tray at its side; a turkey wing, bound with velvet, lay on another tray in the corner of the fireplace; just above it hung a pair of old-fashioned bellows; a short, squat shovel, and a pair of grotesquely, long legged tongs stood near; the two looking like a lank old man, and his fat, little wife.

Taken altogether, it had a quaint, old-fashioned look, which told pathetically of mouldering forms, and days long since dead.

All other rooms in the house were entirely destitute of furniture. He soon kindled a fire, and from a little stream which purled through the garden he filled his tin pot and presently it was singing drowsily. Hunger made a sauce piquant to his crackers cheese, and fragant tea; better relished than all the costly dinners eaten when stomach and morals both were overburdened.

The sun was setting in the west amid a glory of gilded clouds; the wind blew faintly across the level meadow and pasture land; no sound disturbed the silence; the tinkle of a cowbell, the crowing of a cock, seemed but to accentuate the peace.

Phil brought the chair out upon the porch, and sat leaning lazily back, dreamily regarding his surroundings. How much sweeter this than the restless, unsatisfying life which he had led! In some occult manner the quaint old-fashioned house and the peaceful scene brought his mother before his mind; the saddened quiet, the tinge of sweet loneliness, seemed like a reflection of her life. A wave of regret swept over him that he had not been a better son. He remembered that she had saved and denied herself many comforts that he might receive a fine education, and study art under the most favorable circumstances. He blushed with shame to think how ungrateful he had been, and felt glad that the money had not fallen to him while she yet lived, for he knew

that his reckless course would have grieved her sorely. Heretofore he had consoled himself with the thought that there were others much worse than he; he began to understand that comparison did not in the least palliate the offense; he felt a greater twinge of shame as he thought of some of his past actions, that thus he had wronged her memory, her teachings, and his higher self.

He drifted from regretful thought into slumber.

It had grown dark; the wind had arisen with the going down of the sun, and the loose boards were rattling noisily; the vines were swaying to and fro, but the stars blinked in the darkened vault in a quizzical manner as he started up in affright. He thought that he felt a hand upon his shoulder, and that he beheld the shadowy outline of a form within the room.

He stood up and shook himself vigorously: "I must have been dreaming; this wind is uncomfortably cold," he said, with a shiver.

He went in, and lighted the candle; he built a fire which leaped and flared up the broad-mouthed fireplace, throwing jolly, fantastic shadows over the great room, much more suggestive of the play of elfins than the gloomy walking of ghosts. He sat drowsily looking into the coals; the fire had burned low, and the room was in half shadow, with a fitful lighting up now and then; a cold wind struck him, and he seemed impelled by some unseen force to look toward the bed; the battered hat appeared to be rising of its own volition above the tall post, and

the face of a man fitted itself beneath it; a cruel face the white brow beetling over deep set, piercing eyes; the jaw massive and square; the lips thin, a mere line across the resolute face; the whole countenance imbued with a strange fierce beauty; a man who would allow nothing to stand in the way of his will. Phil started up with a gasp of terror; he felt suffocated.

"Great God! Is this place haunted, or have I a bad case of nightmare?" he exclaimed aloud.

He could have sworn that he heard a laugh, shrill and blood curdling; but perhaps it was but the wind among the gnarled apple trees—our imagination plays us strange tricks, and the furnishings and appearance of a room have disastrous effect upon our nerves at times.

He slept but fitfully the whole night, although nothing more occurred to alarm him, and with the coming of the morning sun he thought it all a dream.

After he had his breakfast he took his easel out upon the porch; he felt ashamed of the wasted hours which lay behind him, and determined to be more diligent; he placed his board, took his pencil in his hand—and sat staring straight before him. He sought vainly for an inspiration; his brain seemed empty, imagination dead. But one object rose before his mental vision—the face he had seen under the old hat!

He felt tempted to throw pencils and board in among the weeds. He left the easel standing, and went for a long walk; while walking his imagination leaped responsive to his desire; he

outlined his work, and hastened back eager to commence; but as he once more seated himself, the same tormenting sense of inability assailed him; the same terrifying face came ever between him and the board.

With an angry exclamation he commenced sketching; at once he lost all feeling of uncertainty; he worked feverishly, and line by line the face grew before him; he seemed inspired by some power other than his own; a mole in front of the ear, a dimple in the chin, which he did not remember having seen, grew under his hand. A face of strange beauty, but from every lineament shone forth a fierce unconquerable nature, and at last, as the light was fading, he threw down his pencil and stepped back to look at it; he saw the ghostly counterpart hovering just above it; he gave utterance to a frightened exclamation; then said angrily: "I've looked so steadily at that thing, that I see double; I'll take a run and rest myself."

So he carried everything within, and took his way to the lone farmhouse visible in the distance; he found the place occupied by an elderly couple. After some desultory talk, he questioned the woman about the old house and its former occupants; she, nothing averse, told him the following story:

The house was built long before her birth, by a strange, foreign looking man, who, although he appeared to be wealthy, lived the life of a recluse. He suddenly disappeared, and what became of him no one ever knew; the estate was finally sold by the courts, and John Hilyer, then

That evening, sitting in the twilight, she finished the story of that awful night.

She became acquainted with John Hilyer through a young friend in the city; none of her people liked him, they bitterly opposed her seeing him. John, with all the fiery impetuosity of his nature, had fallen in love with her; it was mating the dove with the fierce bird of prey; he fairly compelled her with his fiery persistence. She at last eloped with him, and they were married; he loved her too truly to wrong her. For three months they traveled, he then made preparations to take her to his home. Often his fierce love frightened her; she adored him, but she was afraid of him.

He knew all of her family except one brother, whom he had never seen. The whole family misjudged him in thinking that he had wronged the girl; the brother whom he had never met endeavored to find them; but it was not until they were returning to the old home that he obtained a trace of them. When they were first married Amanda wished to write to her people, but John sternly forbade it.

It was night when they reached home; John kindled a fire, seated her in the great easy-chair with much ceremony, and with many fond words, and fierce kisses made his wife welcome.

He had scarcely left the house to care for the team which brought them, when her brother burst into the room; the happy smiles died upon her lips, never to return again. She trembled with affright; she knew that John might return at any moment and she feared his anger. She

excitedly rose to her feet, and advanced to the center of the room, and as the accusation of shame left her brother's lips, she sank upon her knees, sobbing forth her denial; at first he scoffed at her words; but as conviction of the truth was forced upon him, he begged her pardon, and stooped to kiss her bowed head; through the uncurtained window John witnessed the closing part of the scene.

In his hand he had a hatchet, with which to cut kindling for the fire; in an instant the demon of jealousy sprang to life full grown; he did not consider the absurdity of his thought—does jealousy ever consider? His mind held no thought but that this man was his wife's lover, and the fancied knowledge drove him insane. He silently let himself into the room, creeping, creeping up behind them; as the brother stooped over to caress her, John dealt him a fearful blow; Amanda raised her face with a horrified cry; with an infuriated epithet he struck her, the blow was sufficiently hard to render her insensible, but her heavy garments saved her life. Regaining consciousness, the brother fought desperately, but against a madman he had no chance in his favor.

When his opponent lay before him, a livid corpse, still no compunction touched his conscience; he spurned the lifeless form with his foot, and dragged him out as he would have cast out a dead dog; he threw the body into the well at the end of the porch, and returned to the room.

Amanda recovered consciousness during the

struggle between the two men, but she was without power either of speech or motion; horror held her dumb, her brain only held life. She tried to cry out but could not, she was like one in a trance, even when John lifted her in his arms, and cast her from him, she had little sense of the horror of her situation; something caught her, and with a sudden jerk, she felt herself sus] ended. She had no idea of what held her, or what would become of her should the fabric give way. Instinctively she threw up her arm as her head came in contact with a timber, and for a few seconds she hung there without consciousness enough to make an effort.

Then a sudden terror of the unknown shook her, and she made an effort to raise herself; it was well for her that she could not see the dizzy depth beneath her, in such situations fear is our worst enemy. She cautiously raised herself by a board above her head, until she could loosen her sleeve from a large hook, upon which it had caught; she then easily raised herself until she could climb over the low curb, and stood upon the ground outside; here she sank down, weak and trembling for a few minutes. Then, though a chill fear assailed her, she determined to go into the house; she wondered where her brother was, that he did not come to her rescue; but she must go in! John, her John, would surely not harm her knowingly; she dragged herself along wearily, holding on to the side of the house for support; she felt so sick and tired.

She looked in through one of the long windows, the candle had been extinguished long

since by a draught of wind, the fire had burned low, and only an occasional fitful blaze leaped up, and lighted the room intermittently; in one of the flashes she saw John lying in the middle of the floor.

"Poor fellow, he is sorry now that he gave way to his quick temper, and he is lying there grieving. I wonder where Brother Ernest is?"

She pulled herself slowly into the room; the wall clock ticked loudly, its long pendulum seeming to take a preternatural sweep; as she neared the recumbent figure the fire crackled ominously, and the blaze flared up redly, like blood; she shivered as she bent over the recumbent figure. A brand fell to the earth, a bright flame shot up lighting all the room, and the pallid face of the dead man. The horror and desolation of all things smote her with sudden madness.

Months afterward she wandered into her old home; it was in dead of winter, she was half naked, white haired, wan, and emaciated; her father and mother remembered nothing, save that she was their child. For weeks she lay on the bed, white and silent, or sat in an easy-chair beside a sunny window, propped up with pillows, but when her baby girl was laid in her arms she looked at it with the light of love and reason in her sad eyes; but the same silence which had characterized her lunacy, remained in her sanity. Of what use to explain to them those awful incidents; they did not believe that she was John Hilyer's wife—why should she make further explanation to be disbelieved?

She was either morbidly wrong, or—still a little unbalanced by all that she had endured.

She named her babe Maida Hilyer, but all persisted in calling the child Cosgrove.

"The name doesn't matter," she said sadly; but later when she saw her supposed sin visited upon the innocent child she cried aloud to the All Merciful to right her wrong.

The ways of the All Wise are not our ways, very fortunately, or things would be greatly muddled. The old father and mother died, but Amanda and her child remained at the farm.

Maida was eighteen, a gentle, rarely thoughtful girl; her mother's sorrow seemed to have left its impress on her character and mind; she early showed a decided artistic talent, which her mother took pains to cultivate; all went well until Maida gained recognition; then that jealousy which ever seems to lie in wait for unpropitious circumstances, seized upon the name she bore to taunt her.

Poor Maida! She threw herself into her mother's arms, ready to give up her chosen profession. Her mother said sadly: "Be brave, my child! I know that some day the truth will come to light!"

Maida thought continually of her mother's words, and with all her soul sought to reach the one who she felt was destined to help right the grievous wrong; but she continued her work as sweetly and firmly as though no wound was there.

One night her mother dreamed of the old house, it looked as it did the night of the

tragedy; she saw a strange form there, and she reached out her hands supplicatingly, beseeching his help; to her spiritual sense it was made manifest that her wish should be accomplished; she told this to Maida, and the two talked of the little else, and thought of it without cessation, until night after night in her dreams Maida stood by that stranger's form, urging him to clear up the mystery.

The will inclosed with the certificate gave all of his property to his "beloved wife, Amanda Cosgrove Hilyer."

There was no more cause to taunt Maida, and there was no opposition to Amanda's taking possession of the property, which necessitated a visit to the place. Amanda walked silently about: "Poor John! Poor John!" she said pathetically; they looked shudderingly down into the depths of the old well, and as though some occult influence prompted her, Amanda said, "I wonder what became of brother Ernest. No one ever saw him after that time; I wish that I knew!"

Philip thought it far better that she did not know, therefore he kept silence.

The hook upon which Amanda had caught was still firmly imbedded in the beam; in the elder Mrs. Hilyer's day it had been used to suspend butter and cream into the cool depths below.

Philip showed them the secret panel, and in doing so discovered another secret for himself; the lower portion of the panel formed a drawer; as long as the drawer remained open, the mouth of the dog would not close, but as the drawer

was shut, the mouth came together with a vicious snap, as though the thing were possessed of life. This drawer contained all of John Hilyer's papers, and a large sum of money; and here also they found the story of the lonely heart life of a man of strong feeling, and untaught, ungoverned passions; a sad record of a noble soul gone astray.

Phil and his wife Maida are very happy, and with the gentle, white-haired mother, they live in the pleasant cottage where Phil in his concentration first saw them.

A NINETEENTH CENTURY GHOST.

My health had failed at last through constant work, long hours, insufficient and irregular diet, and my nerves paid the penalty for thus transgressing nature's laws. Every sin brings its own punishment, whether it be mental, moral, or physical; it may be that payment is not exacted to day, or to-morrow, but sooner or later the penalty will surely follow the sin.

I was in fact mentally, as well as bodily exhausted; I had reached the very depths of disgust; nothing seemed worth doing, everything was useless; work was worse than useless, a foolishness; pleasure—nothing was a pleasure. Like one of old I cried out: "All is vanity and vexation of spirit."

I went into the country; not to a distant railway station, to become one of a dissatisfied mob at a crowded summer hotel, but into the very heart of the green hills, where the limpid streams gurgled for very joy, as they frolicked on their way to the distant river; where the woods were so dense that the sun could only play hide and seek with the softly fluttering leaves, once in a while touching the soft mossy carpet, or the glossy leaves of the scarlet checkerberries lovingly.

Here I found the dearest, quaintest old houses

with pointed gables under which the noisy swallows built their nests of mud—a house with small, many-paned windows, and great, yawning fireplaces.

The simple-hearted old people who owned the place welcomed me with unaffected curiosity.

I dawdled in the evenings in the sitting room with grandpa and grandma Yoeman, with no light save the flickering blaze of the hickory logs; idly watching the pictures in the glowing coals, and dreaming strange sweet dreams, which ever held a reflection of entrancing sadness.

The fitful blaze cast strange lights and shadows on the low ceiling; glinting on grandma's busy knitting needles; brightening and fading like an uncertain life.

Occasionally one of the neighbors came in to exchange news about the planting; to borrow or "swap" garden seeds; to speculate on the weather; the greater reason being to see the city boarder.

Sometimes their frank inquisitiveness amused, at other times it annoyed me.

I had been there a month; the weather had grown too warm to permit a fire in the evening, and the sitting room looked dismal with its one small kerosene lamp, around which the moths fluttered, and singed their foolish wings, nearly obscuring the light.

"Drat the things," said grandma, from time to time.

Heavy clouds lay low in the west, and the occasional low growling of thunder indicated the

coming of a storm; the breeze scarcely lifted the muslin curtain at the window.

A rush of homesickness came over me; the gloom depressed me, and left me wretched; the sultry atmosphere seemed unbearable; the quaint, low-ceiled rooms seemed suffocating, and detestably ugly, and I wondered that I could have thought them so charming.

I hurried away to my room, which was at the further end of the house, to hide my tears. The long, draughty hall seemed filled with lurking shadows; I thought it endless, and was sure that the doors were opening on either side as I passed. I dashed open the door of my own room, and for a few breathless minutes crouched in the corner most thoroughly frightened. Presently, ashamed of my childish terror, I arose and lighted my lamp.

I could not shake off the frightened feeling; the dim, uncertain light of the small lamp left the corners of the room in wavering gloom; the gathering clouds sent out their advance signals —a fitful gust of moist wind—now and then, which suddenly flapped the curtain at the window as though shaken by an angry hand, and swayed the old fashioned valance to the bed until I felt ready to scream.

I closed the blinds, turned the blaze of the lamp still higher, endeavoring to make the room look cheerful. Ah, well! The cheerfulness oftener comes from within than without, and I was nervously depressed and homesick.

I was in that restless mood in which everything is irksome. I wished to write, I could

not; a thousand elusive fancies floated by me like thistledown; my mind reached out to grasp them—a tantalizing caprice of the brain, a feeling of mental inadequacy—and they were gone into the realm of the goblin, Incompetent.

I threw down the pen: "What a strange thing the brain is! At times docile and obedient; again, willful, elusive, exasperating; a thing over which one has no control," I cried angrily.

I walked restlessly up and down the room until I was fatigued, and impatiently threw myself into a great armchair; taking up an unfinished book I tried to read, I turned a page or two without comprehending a thought; I threw the book to the furthest corner of the room in anger and disgust.

Again I walked the floor impatiently, and in the same wretched mood, undressed and went to bed, where I vainly endeavored to sleep.

The clouds, which had been gathering since dusk, now marshalled their forces for battle; the vivid lightning played about the room in wildly fantastic manner; a momentary white glare, then the darkness of Inferno. The heavy thunder growled an accompaniment, or broke into a sharp crash, dying away like the angry growl of the discomfited storm fiend.

The wind arose, and swung the rickety shutters to and fro throughout the whole house with many an angry crash; the dead branches of an old tree—standing by the corner window—tapped on the shaking pane with ghostly fingers.

I had extinguished my light, the flame annoyed me; and now—from being nervous—I be-

came hysterical. Several times, as a vivid glow illumined the room, followed by an awful crash, I screamed outright; it disturbed no one; grandma and grandpa Yoeman slept in the far end of the house. I became so frightened that I pulled the covers over my head and lay there shivering.

The electrical storm had somewhat subsided, but the wind was blowing shrilly, and the rain coming down in sheets.

Some impulse compelled me to uncover my head; a nervous sensation that something or some one was in the room—a terror of the unseen. I drew down the bedclothes, arose on one elbow, and gave a horrified scream, which died away in an awful constriction of the throat.

A figure floated before my affrighted eyes; now coming toward me a pace, then receding; disappearing only to return again. It seemed to float in the air with a strange undulating motion. I could not turn my eyes away, although filled with a mortal terror. It stood out like a picture, clear and distinct, as though the body were filled with luminous light; the turn of the head, the glint of the hair, suggestive of one whom I had known and hated in the past—which it still drove me mad to remember—as I perceived the likeness, or as it seemed, the reality, all fear left me; instantly my soul was filled with wrath; all the old agony came over me like an overwhelming flood; I seemed to feel again all the pangs caused by the treachery and deceit of that false friend. I started up with a bitter cry, and rushed at the hated face to rend it.

My hands clutched but empty air! The vision was as elusive as had been my thoughts; I could grasp neither.

I crept back into bed bathed in a cold perspiration, and such was my mental and bodily exhaustion that I sank into a stupor and knew no more until morning.

When I awoke the sun was shining brightly, and as I jumped out of bed and threw open the blinds my fears of the past night seemed like an absurd dream.

The face of nature looked so refreshed after her bath; the gentle breeze shook the blossoming lilacs, to which the raindrops still clung like countless jewels; their odor came deliciously wafted to me as I leaned from the open windows; the grass glittered with clinging moisture among its tender green; a bluebird swung on the branch of a gnarled old apple tree just bursting into bloom and let out a flood of glorious song; a meadow lark, sitting on the single post which rose above its fellows, accepted the challenge and sang with all his might: "Sweet, sweet, sweet; John G. Whittier!" again and again.

Fear seemed most absurd with all this wealth of sunshine and springing vegetation around me; but grandma Yoeman said to me as I entered the kitchen for breakfast, "You look awfully peaked, Miss Eda; was you so 'fraid of the storm that you didn't sleep well?"

"Oh, I'm all right, grandma!" Nevertheless, I could not eat my breafast of hot biscuit, golden honey, ham and eggs; although I made a pre-

tense of enjoying the food, as I knew that grandma tried very hard to please me.

When night came my nerves again asserted themselves; every sound made me start apprehensively. My window was wide open; the great old lilac bushes seemed to lean caressingly in, their odor borne to me on the soft, warm wind, as it playfully lifted the thin curtain.

All was so balmy, quiet and sweet that after a time it soothed my excited nerves, and I slept soundly until morning.

Thus it continued for two weeks, until I began to think that I must have been dreaming. I saw nothing, I heard nothing more alarming than the rats, which scurried up and down between the plastering and the clapboards, or gnawed industriously at the narrow base.

I had been roaming over the fields all day; I had climbed from rock to rock down the shallow creek as happy as a child; I had lain on the last year's leaves, and plaited a crown of checkerberries, the glossy green of the leaf, and the brilliant red of the berries forming a lovely contrast. I gathered also a great bunch of wild forget-me-nots; it was sunset when I reached home; I placed the flowers on the little stand in front of the mirror, and hung the wreath above it, so that the mirror reflected it like a duplicate.

I retired early, and immediately dropped to sleep. Some time during the night I was awakened—it might have been a shutter that slammed, or a door in one of the empty rooms—in my half-awakened state it sounded like a pistol shot. As I started up in bed I became con-

scious of an unusual commotion; the trees were swaying and creaking; the lilacs bent and shivered; my curtains were swept straight out into the room, and as I looked with startled eyes the luminous figure once more stood before me, fearfully distinct; the bouquet of forget-me-nots I had gathered held in her hand; the crown of leaves and berries resting on her head; even in my awful fright I observed that it was tipped coquetishly over the right side of the head, instead of being set demurely on top. She seemed to advance and recede, waving the flowers at me derisively; again the resemblance to that woman whom my soul loathed struck me with a sickening sense of pain and hatred.

I had often listened to my old grandmother as she told tales of supernatural visitations and mysterious warnings; of the death watch in the wall, and that immediately following these prognostications some beloved one surely departed this life; she related instances of ghostly tappings on the headboard, and of a deadly chill, like a cadaverous finger, creeping up and down the spine, to warn the unhappy recipient that a stranger was treading on their future grave.

These half-forgotten teachings recurred to me with awful vividness, and I experienced the same sensations which drove me, at that time, shivering to my bed to lie with sleepless eyes listening for the dread signal. I felt sure that this "presence" was a warning that my death was near, and that *she* brought the message, was an added menace —unless I forgave her. I had never known hate of any other being in my life; I had said egotis-

tically that it was not in my nature to hate. Circumstances show us that we have a very limited acquaintance with our capabilities and proclivities; I learned that lesson through fiery tribulation. Another thing which I had been taught as a child now recurred to my mind as a torment. I had been taught that I must forgive, if I would be forgiven, and that I must love my enemy.

How could I forgive her? Though death, or that punishment which I had been taught would come after death, should stare me in the face, I could not forgive the deliberate wrecking of my life's happiness.

The vision disappeared while these tormenting thoughts raced each other through my mind; as suddenly returning, it advanced menacingly toward the bed.

A fresh blast of wind shook the old house from garret to foundation; doors crashed, blinds rattled and shook; trees swayed and groaned dismally; the low of the frightened cattle was borne on the wings of the blast; a dog howled dismally from out the darkness. I could look no more; I covered my head and shivered with mortal terror. The following morning I was unable to rise; there was no questioning in my mind. I felt sure that I was doomed; that the warning was not only of my demise, but of future punishment as well, unless I forgave the bearer of that message. This last thought continually tortured me. How could I force forgiveness? I might profess it, I might even try and cheat myself into thinking it; but the

That evening, sitting in the twilight, she finished the story of that awful night.

She became acquainted with John Hilyer through a young friend in the city; none of her people liked him, they bitterly opposed her seeing him. John, with all the fiery impetuosity of his nature, had fallen in love with her; it was mating the dove with the fierce bird of prey; he fairly compelled her with his fiery persistence. She at last eloped with him, and they were married; he loved her too truly to wrong her. For three months they traveled, he then made preparations to take her to his home. Often his fierce love frightened her; she adored him, but she was afraid of him.

He knew all of her family except one brother, whom he had never seen. The whole family misjudged him in thinking that he had wronged the girl; the brother whom he had never met endeavored to find them; but it was not until they were returning to the old home that he obtained a trace of them. When they were first married Amanda wished to write to her people, but John sternly forbade it.

It was night when they reached home; John kindled a fire, seated her in the great easy-chair with much ceremony, and with many fond words, and fierce kisses made his wife welcome.

He had scarcely left the house to care for the team which brought them, when her brother burst into the room; the happy smiles died upon her lips, never to return again. She trembled with affright; she knew that John might return at any moment and she feared his anger. She

excitedly rose to her feet, and advanced to the center of the room, and as the accusation of shame left her brother's lips, she sank upon her knees, sobbing forth her denial; at first he scoffed at her words; but as conviction of the truth was forced upon him, he begged her pardon, and stooped to kiss her bowed head; through the uncurtained window John witnessed the closing part of the scene.

In his hand he had a hatchet, with which to cut kindling for the fire; in an instant the demon of jealousy sprang to life full grown; he did not consider the absurdity of his thought—does jealousy ever consider? His mind held no thought but that this man was his wife's lover, and the fancied knowledge drove him insane. He silently let himself into the room, creeping, creeping up behind them; as the brother stooped over to caress her, John dealt him a fearful blow; Amanda raised her face with a horrified cry; with an infuriated epithet he struck her, the blow was sufficiently hard to render her insensible, but her heavy garments saved her life. Regaining consciousness, the brother fought desperately, but against a madman he had no chance in his favor.

When his opponent lay before him, a livid corpse, still no compunction touched his conscience; he spurned the lifeless form with his foot, and dragged him out as he would have cast out a dead dog; he threw the body into the well at the end of the porch, and returned to the room.

Amanda recovered consciousness during the

struggle between the two men, but she was without power either of speech or motion; horror held her dumb, her brain only held life. She tried to cry out but could not, she was like one in a trance, even when John lifted her in his arms, and cast her from him, she had little sense of the horror of her situation; something caught her, and with a sudden jerk, she felt herself suspended. She had no idea of what held her, or what would become of her should the fabric give way. Instinctively she threw up her arm as her head came in contact with a timber, and for a few seconds she hung there without consciousness enough to make an effort.

Then a sudden terror of the unknown shook her, and she made an effort to raise herself; it was well for her that she could not see the dizzy depth beneath her, in such situations fear is our worst enemy. She cautiously raised herself by a board above her head, until she could loosen her sleeve from a large hook, upon which it had caught; she then easily raised herself until she could climb over the low curb, and stood upon the ground outside; here she sank down, weak and trembling for a few minutes. Then, though a chill fear assailed her, she determined to go into the house; she wondered where her brother was, that he did not come to her rescue; but she must go in! John, her John, would surely not harm her knowingly; she dragged herself along wearily, holding on to the side of the house for support; she felt so sick and tired.

She looked in through one of the long windows, the candle had been extinguished long

since by a draught of wind, the fire had burned low, and only an occasional fitful blaze leaped up, and lighted the room intermittently; in one of the flashes she saw John lying in the middle of the floor.

"Poor fellow, he is sorry now that he gave way to his quick temper, and he is lying there grieving. I wonder where Brother Ernest is?"

She pulled herself slowly into the room; the wall clock ticked loudly, its long pendulum seeming to take a preternatural sweep; as she neared the recumbent figure the fire crackled ominously, and the blaze flared up redly, like blood; she shivered as she bent over the recumbent figure. A brand fell to the earth, a bright flame shot up lighting all the room, and the pallid face of the dead man. The horror and desolation of all things smote her with sudden madness.

Months afterward she wandered into her old home; it was in dead of winter, she was half naked, white haired, wan, and emaciated; her father and mother remembered nothing, save that she was their child. For weeks she lay on the bed, white and silent, or sat in an easy-chair beside a sunny window, propped up with pillows, but when her baby girl was laid in her arms she looked at it with the light of love and reason in her sad eyes; but the same silence which had characterized her lunacy, remained in her sanity. Of what use to explain to them those awful incidents; they did not believe that she was John Hilyer's wife—why should she make further explanation to be disbelieved?

She was either morbidly wrong, or—still a little unbalanced by all that she had endured.

She named her babe Maida Hilyer, but all persisted in calling the child Cosgrove.

"The name doesn't matter," she said sadly; but later when she saw her supposed sin visited upon the innocent child she cried aloud to the All Merciful to right her wrong.

The ways of the All Wise are not our ways, very fortunately, or things would be greatly muddled. The old father and mother died, but Amanda and her child remained at the farm.

Maida was eighteen, a gentle, rarely thoughtful girl; her mother's sorrow seemed to have left its impress on her character and mind; she early showed a decided artistic talent, which her mother took pains to cultivate; all went well until Maida gained recognition; then that jealousy which ever seems to lie in wait for unpropitious circumstances, seized upon the name she bore to taunt her.

Poor Maida! She threw herself into her mother's arms, ready to give up her chosen profession. Her mother said sadly: "Be brave, my child! I know that some day the truth will come to light!"

Maida thought continually of her mother's words, and with all her soul sought to reach the one who she felt was destined to help right the grievous wrong; but she continued her work as sweetly and firmly as though no wound was there.

One night her mother dreamed of the old house, it looked as it did the night of the

tragedy; she saw a strange form there, and she reached out her hands supplicatingly, beseeching his help; to her spiritual sense it was made manifest that her wish should be accomplished; she told this to Maida, and the two talked of the little else, and thought of it without cessation, until night after night in her dreams Maida stood by that stranger's form, urging him to clear up the mystery.

The will inclosed with the certificate gave all of his property to his "beloved wife, Amanda Cosgrove Hilyer."

There was no more cause to taunt Maida, and there was no opposition to Amanda's taking possession of the property, which necessitated a visit to the place. Amanda walked silently about: "Poor John! Poor John!" she said pathetically; they looked shudderingly down into the depths of the old well, and as though some occult influence prompted her, Amanda said, "I wonder what became of brother Ernest. No one ever saw him after that time; I wish that I knew!"

Philip thought it far better that she did not know, therefore he kept silence.

The hook upon which Amanda had caught was still firmly imbedded in the beam; in the elder Mrs. Hilyer's day it had been used to suspend butter and cream into the cool depths below.

Philip showed them the secret panel, and in doing so discovered another secret for himself; the lower portion of the panel formed a drawer; as long as the drawer remained open, the mouth of the dog would not close, but as the drawer

was shut, the mouth came together with a vicious snap, as though the thing were possessed of life. This drawer contained all of John Hilyer's papers, and a large sum of money; and here also they found the story of the lonely heart life of a man of strong feeling, and untaught, ungoverned passions; a sad record of a noble soul gone astray.

Phil and his wife Maida are very happy, and with the gentle, white-haired mother, they live in the pleasant cottage where Phil in his concentration first saw them.

A NINETEENTH CENTURY GHOST.

My health had failed at last through constant work, long hours, insufficient and irregular diet, and my nerves paid the penalty for thus transgressing nature's laws. Every sin brings its own punishment, whether it be mental, moral, or physical; it may be that payment is not exacted to day, or to-morrow, but sooner or later the penalty will surely follow the sin.

I was in fact mentally, as well as bodily exhausted; I had reached the very depths of disgust; nothing seemed worth doing, everything was useless; work was worse than useless, a foolishness; pleasure—nothing was a pleasure. Like one of old I cried out: "All is vanity and vexation of spirit."

I went into the country; not to a distant railway station, to become one of a dissatisfied mob at a crowded summer hotel, but into the very heart of the green hills, where the limpid streams gurgled for very joy, as they frolicked on their way to the distant river; where the woods were so dense that the sun could only play hide and seek with the softly fluttering leaves, once in a while touching the soft mossy carpet, or the glossy leaves of the scarlet checkerberries lovingly.

Here I found the dearest, quaintest old houses

with pointed gables under which the noisy swallows built their nests of mud—a house with small, many-paned windows, and great, yawning fireplaces.

The simple-hearted old people who owned the place welcomed me with unaffected curiosity.

I dawdled in the evenings in the sitting room with grandpa and grandma Yoeman, with no light save the flickering blaze of the hickory logs; idly watching the pictures in the glowing coals, and dreaming strange sweet dreams, which ever held a reflection of entrancing sadness.

The fitful blaze cast strange lights and shadows on the low ceiling; glinting on grandma's busy knitting needles; brightening and fading like an uncertain life.

Occasionally one of the neighbors came in to exchange news about the planting; to borrow or "swap" garden seeds; to speculate on the weather; the greater reason being to see the city boarder.

Sometimes their frank inquisitiveness amused, at other times it annoyed me.

I had been there a month; the weather had grown too warm to permit a fire in the evening, and the sitting room looked dismal with its one small kerosene lamp, around which the moths fluttered, and singed their foolish wings, nearly obscuring the light.

"Drat the things," said grandma, from time to time.

Heavy clouds lay low in the west, and the occasional low growling of thunder indicated the

coming of a storm; the breeze scarcely lifted the muslin curtain at the window.

A rush of homesickness came over me; the gloom depressed me, and left me wretched; the sultry atmosphere seemed unbearable; the quaint, low-ceiled rooms seemed suffocating, and detestably ugly, and I wondered that I could have thought them so charming.

I hurried away to my room, which was at the further end of the house, to hide my tears. The long, draughty hall seemed filled with lurking shadows; I thought it endless, and was sure that the doors were opening on either side as I passed. I dashed open the door of my own room, and for a few breathless minutes crouched in the corner most thoroughly frightened. Presently, ashamed of my childish terror, I arose and lighted my lamp.

I could not shake off the frightened feeling; the dim, uncertain light of the small lamp left the corners of the room in wavering gloom; the gathering clouds sent out their advance signals —a fitful gust of moist wind—now and then, which suddenly flapped the curtain at the window as though shaken by an angry hand, and swayed the old fashioned valance to the bed until I felt ready to scream.

I closed the blinds, turned the blaze of the lamp still higher, endeavoring to make the room look cheerful. Ah, well! The cheerfulness oftener comes from within than without, and I was nervously depressed and homesick.

I was in that restless mood in which everything is irksome. I wished to write, I could

not; a thousand elusive fancies floated by me like thistledown; my mind reached out to grasp them—a tantalizing caprice of the brain, a feeling of mental inadequacy—and they were gone into the realm of the goblin, Incompetent.

I threw down the pen: "What a strange thing the brain is! At times docile and obedient; again, willful, elusive, exasperating; a thing over which one has no control," I cried angrily.

I walked restlessly up and down the room until I was fatigued, and impatiently threw myself into a great armchair; taking up an unfinished book I tried to read, I turned a page or two without comprehending a thought; I threw the book to the furthest corner of the room in anger and disgust.

Again I walked the floor impatiently, and in the same wretched mood, undressed and went to bed, where I vainly endeavored to sleep.

The clouds, which had been gathering since dusk, now marshalled their forces for battle; the vivid lightning played about the room in wildly fantastic manner; a momentary white glare, then the darkness of Inferno. The heavy thunder growled an accompaniment, or broke into a sharp crash, dying away like the angry growl of the discomfited storm fiend.

The wind arose, and swung the rickety shutters to and fro throughout the whole house with many an angry crash; the dead branches of an old tree—standing by the corner window—tapped on the shaking pane with ghostly fingers.

I had extinguished my light, the flame annoyed me; and now—from being nervous—I be-

came hysterical. Several times, as a vivid glow illumined the room, followed by an awful crash, I screamed outright; it disturbed no one; grandma and grandpa Yoeman slept in the far end of the house. I became so frightened that I pulled the covers over my head and lay there shivering.

The electrical storm had somewhat subsided, but the wind was blowing shrilly, and the rain coming down in sheets.

Some impulse compelled me to uncover my head; a nervous sensation that something or some one was in the room—a terror of the unseen. I drew down the bedclothes, arose on one elbow, and gave a horrified scream, which died away in an awful constriction of the throat.

A figure floated before my affrighted eyes; now coming toward me a pace, then receding; disappearing only to return again. It seemed to float in the air with a strange undulating motion. I could not turn my eyes away, although filled with a mortal terror. It stood out like a picture, clear and distinct, as though the body were filled with luminous light; the turn of the head, the glint of the hair, suggestive of one whom I had known and hated in the past—which it still drove me mad to remember—as I perceived the likeness, or as it seemed, the reality, all fear left me; instantly my soul was filled with wrath; all the old agony came over me like an overwhelming flood; I seemed to feel again all the pangs caused by the treachery and deceit of that false friend. I started up with a bitter cry, and rushed at the hated face to rend it.

My hands clutched but empty air! The vision was as elusive as had been my thoughts; I could grasp neither.

I crept back into bed bathed in a cold perspiration, and such was my mental and bodily exhaustion that I sank into a stupor and knew no more until morning.

When I awoke the sun was shining brightly, and as I jumped out of bed and threw open the blinds my fears of the past night seemed like an absurd dream.

The face of nature looked so refreshed after her bath; the gentle breeze shook the blossoming lilacs, to which the raindrops still clung like countless jewels; their odor came deliciously wafted to me as I leaned from the open windows; the grass glittered with clinging moisture among its tender green; a bluebird swung on the branch of a gnarled old apple tree just bursting into bloom and let out a flood of glorious song; a meadow lark, sitting on the single post which rose above its fellows, accepted the challenge and sang with all his might: "Sweet, sweet, sweet; John G. Whittier!" again and again.

Fear seemed most absurd with all this wealth of sunshine and springing vegetation around me; but grandma Yoeman said to me as I entered the kitchen for breakfast, "You look awfully peaked, Miss Eda; was you so 'fraid of the storm that you didn't sleep well?"

"Oh, I'm all right, grandma!" Nevertheless, I could not eat my breafast of hot biscuit, golden honey, ham and eggs; although I made a pre-

tense of enjoying the food, as I knew that grandma tried very hard to please me.

When night came my nerves again asserted themselves; every sound made me start apprehensively. My window was wide open; the great old lilac bushes seemed to lean caressingly in, their odor borne to me on the soft, warm wind, as it playfully lifted the thin curtain.

All was so balmy, quiet and sweet that after a time it soothed my excited nerves, and I slept soundly until morning.

Thus it continued for two weeks, until I began to think that I must have been dreaming. I saw nothing, I heard nothing more alarming than the rats, which scurried up and down between the plastering and the clapboards, or gnawed industriously at the narrow base.

I had been roaming over the fields all day; I had climbed from rock to rock down the shallow creek as happy as a child; I had lain on the last year's leaves, and plaited a crown of checkerberries, the glossy green of the leaf, and the brilliant red of the berries forming a lovely contrast. I gathered also a great bunch of wild forget-me-nots; it was sunset when I reached home; I placed the flowers on the little stand in front of the mirror, and hung the wreath above it, so that the mirror reflected it like a duplicate.

I retired early, and immediately dropped to sleep. Some time during the night I was awakened—it might have been a shutter that slammed, or a door in one of the empty rooms—in my half-awakened state it sounded like a pistol shot. As I started up in bed I became con-

scious of an unusual commotion; the trees were swaying and creaking; the lilacs bent and shivered; my curtains were swept straight out into the room, and as I looked with startled eyes the luminous figure once more stood before me, fearfully distinct; the bouquet of forget-me-nots I had gathered held in her hand; the crown of leaves and berries resting on her head; even in my awful fright I observed that it was tipped coquetishly over the right side of the head, instead of being set demurely on top. She seemed to advance and recede, waving the flowers at me derisively; again the resemblance to that woman whom my soul loathed struck me with a sickening sense of pain and hatred.

I had often listened to my old grandmother as she told tales of supernatural visitations and mysterious warnings; of the death watch in the wall, and that immediately following these prognostications some beloved one surely departed this life; she related instances of ghostly tappings on the headboard, and of a deadly chill, like a cadaverous finger, creeping up and down the spine, to warn the unhappy recipient that a stranger was treading on their future grave.

These half-forgotten teachings recurred to me with awful vividness, and I experienced the same sensations which drove me, at that time, shivering to my bed to lie with sleepless eyes listening for the dread signal. I felt sure that this "presence" was a warning that my death was near, and that *she* brought the message, was an added menace —unless I forgave her. I had never known hate of any other being in my life; I had said egotis-

tically that it was not in my nature to hate. Circumstances show us that we have a very limited acquaintance with our capabilities and proclivities; I learned that lesson through fiery tribulation. Another thing which I had been taught as a child now recurred to my mind as a torment. I had been taught that I must forgive, if I would be forgiven, and that I must love my enemy.

How could I forgive her? Though death, or that punishment which I had been taught would come after death, should stare me in the face, I could not forgive the deliberate wrecking of my life's happiness.

The vision disappeared while these tormenting thoughts raced each other through my mind; as suddenly returning, it advanced menacingly toward the bed.

A fresh blast of wind shook the old house from garret to foundation; doors crashed, blinds rattled and shook; trees swayed and groaned dismally; the low of the frightened cattle was borne on the wings of the blast; a dog howled dismally from out the darkness. I could look no more; I covered my head and shivered with mortal terror. The following morning I was unable to rise; there was no questioning in my mind. I felt sure that I was doomed; that the warning was not only of my demise, but of future punishment as well, unless I forgave the bearer of that message. This last thought continually tortured me. How could I force forgiveness? I might profess it, I might even try and cheat myself into thinking it; but the

turn of a head, the movement of a hand, the tone of a voice, would bring a never-to-be-forgotten picture before my mind, which would give the lie to all my pretense. I hated with just cause, and should I forgive, would I not thereby place myself on a level with that creature of debasement? Could I stoop to such forgiveness, and retain my own self-respect? No! no! no! I could pass by; I could leave her and her ways to the inevitable punishment that must follow her deeds; I could avoid being in anywise the instrument of vengeance in the hand of Providence, though Providence walked by my side and whispered in my ear temptingly; but forgive her and respect myself I could not; by condoning the offense I should actually sanction it.

Oh, the agony of that incessant thinking! Fighting the battle over and over again, only to cry out despairingly: "I cannot! I cannot!" Day by day my strength diminished; night after night ended in horror and despair.

Sometimes for a night or two the ghostly presence did not appear, then, as hope began to dawn, it suddenly stood leering at me motionlessly; at other times it undulated, advanced and receded, in maddening fashion. I made all necessary preparations for the end which I felt must be very near; there were none who would mourn me greatly; although I had but one enemy, yet I had few friends; I could not open my heart to the whole world.

I had lived as nearly right as I knew—now another question added to the torment of my

mind; was I to be punished for that which I did not know? How well I remembered the grim old preacher, who, pacing back and forth, told us Sabbath after Sabbath that we were certain of punishment because we did not know, that we must repent; that all were born in sin. I used to think how much better it would have been not to have been born at all than to have to be sorry for something you did not know anything about.

He looked so savage as he pounded the pulpit that I used to slip off the seat and try and hide; I thought he was going to help the Lord punish us, and I tried so hard to be sorry, although I did not know for what. Now I was troubled fearing that this was a truth; we are so much more lazy than we wish to admit; we drift with circumstances, and call it fate; we crouch down and receive degrading blows because it is so much easier than fighting for the right. Letting things drift had ever been my weakness, I so enjoyed being lazily happy; now I was tormented with fear of the sins of omission.

All through the day I dreaded the coming of the night, and the destested vision; thus day brought me no solace because of harassing doubts, and too perplexing questions. I had irritably begged grandma Yoeman to take the hated wreath and flowers out of my sight, and from that day to this their sweet, woody odor turns me faint and sick.

The days lengthened with the fullness of summer, the petals of the apple blossoms covered the ground with their fragrant snow, and now the

green globes hung from the bending boughs, and the old-fashioned garden was a wealth of color; still I lay languid and helpless, in the low-ceiled room—unheeding the beauty outside—as I lay with my face turned hopelessly to the wall; or if perchance I looked out of the open window, it was but to sigh despairingly: "I shall soon pass away from all things earthly."

I had watched in vain for the tormenting presence for the past two weeks until my mind was in that strange paradoxical state in which I dreaded, yet anxiously awaited its appearance. I believed that one more visit would surely be the last.

Still another week passed, a week of dread anticipation; the day had been so invigorating that in spite of my morbid imaginings, my overwrought nerves loosed their tension. I had in the afternoon sat by the open window for an hour or two, drinking in the balm of the atmosphere, and when in the dusk I again crept into the bed I felt fatigued, and lying down was restful; the fresh, clean sheets smelled of lavender, and the soft mattress seemed fitted to every curve of my body. I nestled my head in the pillow, and with the soft wind blowing through the wide-open window, at once dropped asleep. Once or twice in the earlier part of the night I opened my eyes, drowsily conscious that the moon was lighting up the room with pale radiance, also vaguely realizing an unusual sense of peace and comfort.

It must have been very near morning when I awoke with a sinking sense of fright; perspira-

tion stood on my brow cold as death dew; I thought that my hour of dissolution had come. Only the faintest ray of moonlight was visible, as it was disappearing behind a bank of clouds in the west; the wind was whistling shrilly through the trees, and into the room through the open window, between which and the bed, undulated, receded, or darted viciously forward the detestable specter.

For a single instant my whole being sank inertly; I thought the very elements in coalition with my tormenter; then a sudden anger, or antagonism—assailed me. This fiend had wrecked my material life, through my having been taught that resistance was wrong; that if "thine enemy smite thee on one cheek, turn to him also the other."

Should I allow this old parody upon truth to drive me beyond the plane of material existence?

Since evolution began—and who can date its commencement?—resistance has been the law governing the survival of the fittest; can that natural law be wrong? The fact that the possessor of the greater power of resistance survives is practical demonstration of its justice and right. I had in the past weakly let go of home and happiness; now a rage assailed me as fierce as a devastating forest fire; I cried out as I leaped from the bed, "I will not succumb!" I rushed madly at the detested semblance; the hateful leer appeared to grow more diabolical, the poise of the head more insolent, as it evaded me. There came a blast which tore at the shutters, and dashed the old mirror with a crash to

the floor; at that instant the specter dashed wildly toward me, swung dizzily around, and it seemed to my excited imagination that the features assumed an appalled look; a crash at the rear end of the room caused me to turn my head, a thousand misplaced stars seemed scattered over the floor, scintillating in the gloom.

I turned again to renew my warfare—but the specter was nowhere to be seen. I stood bewildered awaiting its return; but it came no more, and with a shiver—half of fright, half of cold—I closed the window and crept into bed; as I pulled the blankets about me, and snuggled down into the pillows, I felt a comforting sense of having defeated my adversary; from that beatific state I fell to musing upon the many contradictory teachings of this life, and idly wondering which was right, or if all were in error, and thus I drifted into slumber.

Grandam Yoeman was in a state of terrible excitement the next morning over the devastation of the storm.

"To think, I've had that looking-glass ever since I was married! I do hope it won't bring you any bad luck, Miss Eda!" said she plaintively.

"Oh, nonsense, grandma! From this hour my better health and my happiness are assured," I replied gayly. I had such perfect confidence that I should no more be troubled by the uncanny vision that it made me very happy.

As I was lazily putting on my clothing, grandma's lamentations broke out afresh: "There's

that picture that my niece Mandy painted, broke all to bits!"

"I wonder that I never saw the picture," said I, more to comfort grandma by an interest in her misfortune than for any other reason.

"Oh, I covered it up to keep the dust from it; it was real purty, jest shone at night like anything," she concluded regretfully.

From that time on, I danced about the old house, and dreamed under the gnarled apple trees, or among the sweet-scented clover, as happy as it is possible to be—except for one longing pain.

I seemed to see that I might, and ought to be, uplifted, exalted above all evil; thus gaining the right from that elevation of purity, to pity and forgive the soul so warped as to prefer evil to good. I now understood that it was like crossing a bridge spanning a foul stream; one might shudder at the offensive sight, but no soil or attaint could touch even the outer garments. I let the sweet air of heaven blow all my bitterness away; the birds and flowers spoke only of love and harmony, and their sweet language taught me that I too had sinned, although I had transgressed simply because I did not understand that I need neither fraternize nor hold aloof, but walk my way in peace and quietude; inasmuch as it lies not in the power of any person to wound my feelings, or to injure me beyond the material; that within me, only, lies the weakness which makes that possible.

As I sat watching the great, lumbering bumble-bees crawl in and out of the hollyhocks,

thinking what fortunate fellows they were, to taste only the sweets of life, there came a quiet step behind me, and a hand was laid upon my shoulder which thrilled me from head to foot; I essayed to rise, but my traitor limbs refused their support; the well-remembered voice sounded afar off, but—oh, so sweet!

"I have come to ask your forgiveness, and to acknowledge my wrong; little woman, will you be merciful?"

I cried out sharply: "But how can I trust you? You promised before, and deceived me so bitterly!" the pent-up agony vibrating through my voice.

Very gently he answered me: "I acknowledge that I did; but give me one more trial—a chance to prove my better self to you—you shall never regret it. Oh, Eda! Look at this tree upon which you are sitting; through some mishap it grew warped and unsightly; but see! it has changed its course, and is growing steadily upward, bearing an abundance of wholesome fruit. Can't you believe that I, too, will mend my course, and that the fruit of my future life will be good?"

The earnest, thrilling voice was as sweetest music to my ear; my heart was so hungry, but—a memory—"But, oh, that woman!" I cried.

"My wife, let us never again mention her! At last I see——"

Manlike, he wished no mention made of his wrongdoing—that he put it behind him he considered sufficient. A sharp pain went through my heart, that all my agony was to be put aside

so lightly; but—he was my husband. I sat a moment irresolute, then placed my hands in his, and replied, "As you wish; but let there be no looking backward, let us both live aright each day, and we shall not fail of being happy."

I made instant resolve to put those higher and better thoughts into practical use, and I have never had cause to regret so doing. Neither the ghost of my enemy, nor the wraith of a regret have since visited me.

WHAT BECAME OF THE MONEY?

Marjorie Melton and Henry Laselle, were an ideally happy couple; for once the course of true love seemed to run smoothly, thus belieing the old adage. Marjy was the pet and heiress of an old aunt with whom she lived. Henry was a young lawyer, with a fair amount of practice, a good reputation, and every prospect of success. Aunt Hattie—as she was lovingly called—lived as befitted her station, on one of the most fashionable avenues.

One Monday evening Aunt Hattie received a large sum of money from the sale of property; as it was after banking hours she locked it away in a small safe in her sitting room. Henry and Marjy sat by the table reading, and commenting on a work of occult science; Henry taking the stand that it was like hunting for a half a dozen pearls in a mountain of sand; Marjy defending the theories with much warmth, as much because of their beauty as because of their truth. Hypnotism was the subject under discussion, Henry declaring that he considered the whole thing "fudge."

Aunt Hattie locked away her money, and as she passed the table, she tossed a slip of paper on which was written the combination of the

safe, to Marjy, saying, "Put that away, please; it is a pity that one must become so forgetful; I have but this instant locked that safe, yet I cannot even now, remember the combination." Her tone expressed such intense disgust with herself that Henry and Marjy laughed merrily.

Henry picked up the slip of paper and read the numbers and letters aloud: "I'll wager that I could repeat that a week from to-night!"

"I'll take that bet; you have a good memory, but I think not quite equal to that; however I'll put this out of your sight, so that you cannot study it;" answered she teasingly, as she hid the paper.

He left the house an hour or so later, and nothing further was said on the subject. After he reached home the letters and figures kept repeating themselves over and over in his mind, until he heartily tired of them; even after he retired they continued to dance before his mental vision, until he angrily exclaimed aloud:

"Oh, confound the things! Small chance of my forgetting them!"

He had barely reached his office the next morning when the telephone bell ran sharply; Aunt Hattie answered his, "Hello!"

"Hello! Henry, is that you?"

"Yes; what is the trouble? Anything wrong up there?"

"No—that is—nothing in particular. Say, Henry, did you take that money last night?"

"Aunt Hattie! Why should you think that I would take your money?" he cried indignantly.

"I thought that perhaps you did it to tease

me; can't you come to the house for a few minutes?"

"Certainly," he replied.

He had been very busy all the morning, and had not once thought of the combination, but no sooner was he on his way to the house than, with tantalizing pertinacity, it began repeating itself over, again and again. Marjy met him at the door, she had evidently been weeping; he caught her hands: "Why, Marjy, what is the matter? Have you been crying over the loss of that money?" he asked in astonishment.

She raised her eyes to his face, a troubled questioning in their depths, "Did you not take it, Henry?"

He drew back in hurt surprise: "What do you mean, Marjy? Do you think that I would take your aunt's money?" he asked indignantly.

Marjy burst into tears: "Auntie—Auntie—" she stammered, and there she stopped, unable to proceed.

He finished the sentence for her; "Thinks me a thief," he said grimly.

She hung her head and sobbed: "You—you are the only person—beside auntie and me, who knew the combination, you know!" she paused, then continued desperately, "You remember that you boasted that you could repeat it a week from that day——"

"I should think so! I haven't been able to get it out of my mind for one minute since; but what has that to do with your aunt's money?"

"No other person knew anything about it," she said naïvely.

"That explains your strange look when you hid the paper; you suspected that I would steal the money."

"Oh, Henry! I had no thought of such a thing!"

"Perhaps not, but you looked it!" he replied hotly.

She drew herself up angrily: "I tell you that there was no such thought in my mind; it must have had birth in your own consciousness; you remember the old adage about 'fleeing when no man pursueth.'" She tossed her pretty head high in the air, and walked into the sitting room; he followed sullenly behind.

Here everything was in disorder; chairs were thrown about; books lay all over the floor with their leaves fluttered open; window drapings were shaken out of their usual prim folds; the piano cover lay in the middle of the room; and at the instant of their entrance Aunt Hattie was on her knees tearing frantically at the edge of the carpet. She turned a red and disheveled countenance toward them.

"Come and help me with this," said she shortly.

"For what are you tearing up the carpet?" asked Marjy.

Auntie stopped her work, and dropped on to her knees staring blankly. "Looking for the money, ninny!" she ejaculated in a tone of intense disgust.

"But Auntie, you put it in the safe!"

She looked bewildered for a moment, then said fatuously, "Did I? I thought perhaps I hid it

under the carpet. Oh, yes; I remember! Henry had the combination; there wasn't any one knew it except you two," she finished angrily.

Marjy turned a reproachful glance on Henry, who stood looking angrily at auntie; she returned an equally angry gaze.

"I do not think it kind of you to play such tricks upon me; give me back the money, and have done with such foolishness!" said she.

"Do you really think that I took your money?" he questioned hotly.

"Of course! There was no one else knew the combination but you——"

"Oh, confound that combination! I've heard it until I'm sick of it! Your niece knew it as well as I—why not suspect her? She was in the house, I was not!"

"Yes, that's so! Marjy did you take it?" fatuously.

Marjy gave Henry a withering look: "What nonsense!" she cried.

"Well, some one took it!" gloomily iterated auntie, as she continued to lift up books, and flutter open papers.

"You had best have a detective look into the matter," said Marjy coldly.

"Oh, not for the world! I wouldn't be so disgraced!" cried auntie excitedly.

"I do not see how you are to ascertain the truth otherwise," remarked Henry.

"Oh, dear! I wouldn't care so much for the money—though it's too much to loose—but to have to suspect those in whom we have placed so

much confidence, and one's very own, is awful!" wailed Aunt Hattie, not very lucidly.

Henry frowned angrily, then Marjy shot him a disdainful glance, and Aunt Hattie glared reproachfully at both.

Henry turned abruptly, lifting his hat in a sudden access of politeness; "I bid you a very good day; if you wish to arrest me, you will find me in my room, two doors away; or in my office on Tremont Street," saying which he strode angrily away.

Marjy ran up to her room and locked herself in, despite her aunt's shrill cry: "Come here, Marjy, and help me to look for that money! Oh, I must find it, it cannot be lost!"

Notwithstanding her asservation, it did seem to be lost. She one moment declared that she was positive that she had locked it in the safe—and scolded and reproached Marjy—then, she railed about Henry, and how impossible it was to trust any one; taking another turn, she doubted herself; she did not know whether or not she put it in the safe at all. "It might be that I took it out after I put it there, and thought it more secure in some other place; but of course I never once thought that Henry would rob me, and he pretended to love you," she would grumble. Then she would fall to tearing things to pieces again.

Whenever her aunt accused her, Marjy only cried out impatiently: "Oh, nonsense, auntie! What would I do with it?"

"I do not know, I am sure!" weakly.

But when she assailed Henry, then Marjy flew

into a tempest of passion. "You know that he could not have touched it; we were all in the room together until he left, and I went to the front door, and closed and locked it after him; he lives two doors away, he couldn't very well come through the walls," indignantly.

"That's so! You must have taken it, then!" hysterically.

"Much more likely that you have hidden it away yourself. Oh, dear! My life is ruined on account of that miserable money! Henry scarcely speaks to me, and says that he will never step inside the house again!"

"I do not see why you should mourn over a thief!" answered Aunt Hattie.

"He isn't a thief. I would as soon think that you took it yourself," she cried wrathfully.

Aunt Hattie grew pale with anger: "Take care what you say, miss," she retorted with quivering lips.

The whole household arrangement, mind, morals and manners, seemed demoralized. Never before had an ill-natured word been spoken between auntie and Marjy. Auntie had been like the placid autumn day, Marjy like the blithe spring sunshine. Now everything was like a draught of bitter water. Henry went about his work listlessly.

The days dragged along tiresomely, Marjy and Henry met occasionally, and although no word was spoken, by tacit consent the engagement was ended. Marjy went nowhere and would receive no company. Gossips commented —there must be something wrong; a bird of the

air whispered—there always is a telltale bird—that Henry was a defaulter; then, rumor had it, a common thief. A kind friend? told him the report—there is also always the kind friend—he was raging. He declared that he would leave the place, that he would not stay here in disgrace; he surely thought that Marjy or her aunt had circulated the report, and he was furious over it.

A little reflection caused him to change his mind about leaving: "I have done no wrong, and I will not run! If they think to drive me away by that scheme, they will get left, that's all!" said he grimly. Meanwhile some one told Marjy that *she* heard that "Henry and Marjy had stolen money from her auntie, and had intended to elope; that Auntie Nelson had caught them before they could get out of the street door; she took the money from Henry, and forbid him the house. It isn't true is it, dear?" concluded she.

Marjy astonished the gossip by such an outburst of temper as frightened her out of the house, after which she locked herself in her own chamber, to sob and cry for the rest of the day. Everything was as miserable as it was possible to be; Marjy would go out no more in daylight, but after nightfall, with a heavy veil over her face, she would steal out for a walk as though she were some guilty thing.

One night as she passed Henry's room she paused and looked up at the window; he sat beside a small table on which was placed a lamp, his head bowed upon his arms in an attitude of

despair; he raised his face, the change and melancholy look filled Marjy's heart with grief. He arose wearily and began pacing to and fro. Marjy dropped her face in her hands and sobbed bitterly; the moon, which had been under a cloud, came out a flood of silver radiance; Marjy leaning against a low railing on the opposite side of the street, was, unconsciously to herself, in the full glow.

"Marjy! Marjy!" called a voice softly.

She started in affright; but Henry caught her hands, and held them fast.

"Marjy, Marjy, my pet, don't cry!"

She made him no answer, but sobbed hysterically in his arms.

"What is it, Marjy, is there more trouble?" he asked, feeling—as most men do in the presence of a woman's tears—perfectly helpless.

"No! no! There doesn't need be more trouble! There isn't any happiness left; auntie is so cross and suspicious—she suspects you, me, and even herself; for whole days at a time she doesn't speak, and if I take a book to read she looks at me as reproachfully as though I were doing some wrong thing; if I look sad she says—she says—I am mourning over a thief, and that makes me mad, because I know it isn't true!" she finished excitedly.

"God bless you, Marjy! That is the first bit of comfort I have received since that miserable night," he answered.

"How could you imagine that I would think you guilty of such a thing?" reproachfully.

"How happens it that you are out so late at night?" he asked irrelevantly.

"I cannot go out in daytime, people say such awful things about us that it makes me ashamed;" sobbing hysterically. When I saw you looking so despondent it just broke my heart."

"Oh, my dear, don't cry!" helplessly.

She smiled at him through her tears: "Well, I will not, you have enough to bear as it is; but why were you so sad to-night?"

"He put his hand under her chin, lifting up her face: "First, and greatest; I thought I had lost that which was dearest to me of aught on earth; I thought that you believed me guilty of taking that money, as you both said repeatedly that I was the only one who knew that accursed combination—and do you know, Marjy, that I can no more get it out of my mind than I can fly. By day and night it haunts me until I am very near insane. I see it before me like sparks of fire; I heard it iterated, and reiterated, and nothing that I can do rids me of the torture; frightful or grotesque pictures are formed, from the midst of which your aunt's face looks out at me with wide-open, reproachful eyes."

A shudder swept over him at the remembrance; he drew her into closer embrace, and said, "Little comforter! It is sweet to know that you have faith in me, when friends and clients are deserting me; some one is busily reporting the whole affair, with numerous embellishments;" after a moment's pause, he continued: "Do you think that auntie would spread the report?"

"Oh, no! No matter what she may say to me, she would not breathe a word of it to others. I must return to the house, or some one will see us talking, and there will be more reports," added Marjy laughingly. They parted with many fond words, and Marjy went home happier than she had been in many a day. This was but one of many meetings.

Aunt Hattie's whole mental attitude seemed changed; nothing is more true than that we have very little knowledge of ourselves; many traits lie dormant until circumstances call them out; hidden dogs that scenting prey hurry forward in restless chase. Auntie had ever been trusting to a singular degree; but now she had become suspicious of everyone, and when Marjy went out two or three nights in succession, she regarded her distrustingly. "I do wonder now, if Marjy goes out to meet that fellow! Probably they are planning that they will have a good time with that money. Oh, dear! I wish that miserable roll of bills had been burned, it wouldn't have given me half as much trouble; it is the uncertainty that vexes me so!"

It is often quoted as an adage, "out of people's mouths we must judge them." I shall certainly have to differ with the wise old proverb maker, though as a rule he is right; sometimes people say the opposite of what they mean; most certainly Aunt Hattie did, when she accused either Henry or Marjy of using the money. The fact was that she was in a state of aggravating uncertainty; she had no actual opinion, being in a

condition of endless surmise, and consequent irritability, which must have an outlet.

That night her suspicions were so wrought up that she followed Marjy, and witnessed the loving meeting of the two; she caught a sound of their low-toned conversation, although she could not distinguish their words. She was in precisely that frame of mind to imagine that everything was intended as an injury to her; she rushed at them, crying and scolding incoherently.

Marjy in an agony of shame tried to appease her, but in vain. Windows were hastily thrown up all along the street: "Oh, auntie, do come home! All the neighbors are listening; auntie! auntie! Just think of the comments!"

Auntie gave a frightened glance at the many opened windows, and at a man hurrying toward them; gossip over her affairs had been the great bugaboo of her life; she regained command of herself instantly. The man was rapidly approaching them, his face alive with curiosity; just as he was on the point of speaking to them, auntie sank to the ground with a groan and burst into loud weeping.

Marjy gave Henry a frightened glance, and turned to auntie in the greatest distress. Auntie cried out shrilly: "Lift me up, Henry! Marjy, do get hold on the other side. Oh, dear! Oh, dear. My poor ankle, I know that it is broken!" and with much groaning and crying she allowed herself to be carried into the house. No sooner had the street door closed behind them than auntie straightened up and said laughingly: "There, I think my ankle is all right now, and those old gossips have missed a treat!"

She was so elated over the affair that she seemed more like herself than for a long time; but as a sequence Marjy could go out no more, unaccompanied by her aunt. Auntie gave Henry a frigid invitation, but he seldom came to the house, and when he did so wore a preoccupied and uncomfortable air; auntie was often disagreeable, and Marjy unhappy and despondent.

About this time a cousin of Marjy's, James Jordan, came to visit Auntie Nelson; he was not long in discovering that things were in an unpleasant condition. He formed a great liking for Henry, who on the contrary was very jealous of James. Marjy went to places of amusement, and was frequently out riding with him; cousin James was consulted upon all occasions. Marjy had no wrong intention in so doing; she thought of him merely as her cousin, and was glad of anything that eased the tension under which they seemed to be living. Henry had become so hypersensitive that he shrank from everything. He often answered James with absolute incivility, to which he only returned some laughing answer; he understood the situation very well, and heartily sympathized with the lovers.

One evening they had gathered around the table in auntie's room; several new magazines lay scattered about, one of which James had been reading. Henry was unusually silent and depressed; his business had steadily decreased, and more than one taunt had been leveled at him; he had ever been proud of his integrity, and scorned all things debasing—as all dishonesty whether of word or deed must be—and

the annoyance had developed a nervous restlessness which prevented sleep, and left him worn, haggard and miserable.

James looked up from the book which he had been reading and said, "What do you think about hypnotism? I have been reading this article, and am very much impressed, as well as interested by it."

The question was addressed to no one in particular, but Henry took it up, and answered roughly: "I think it is a lot of bosh!"

James replied pleasantly: "I don't know that it is, though it may be so. We know that there are subtleties of the mind which we do not understand, and I do not see why there should not be the same amount of force in the higher power of man as in the physical; great feats, either of mind or muscle, are but the result of training; we think because we do not understand that to which we have scarcely given a thought—much less investigated—that it cannot be true; we have no right to cry 'wolf' until we —at least—uncover our eyes."

Henry lifted up his face, a strange eagerness in his voice as he said, "Do you then believe that you could unconsciously to me force me to do that which is against my will?"

"No, indeed! The hypnotic has no will; it is the will of the hypnotizer working through him. I believe that the hypnotizer may not even be positive as to a knowledge of his own power—merely a half-consciousness, a way in which one's thoughts at times move—like the shadow of a fast-sailing summer cloud. Of course to be so

easily influenced, the subject must be of a yielding, plastic temperament; it is as though the operator sent a portion of his own soul on a brief visit into the body of the hypnotized.

A half-frightened look flashed over Henry's countenance—and was instantly gone; he cried out roughly: "I don't believe it! I don't believe it!" He wiped the perspiration from his face with a trembling hand. James laughed at his vigorous protest, and affected not to see the emotion which lay behind it, so he answered lightly: "No compulsion about it, this is just a case of leave it, or take it, as you please—which does not alter the fact that we have many forces within us of which we are in ignorance," he replied quietly.

"Well, all I have to say is this, I wish that I had the power to get one good night's rest, I think that hypnotism would be a blessing, if it were the means of securing it to me; I lie awake half the night to think and worry, and at last fall asleep and dream it all over again, intensified a thousand times, and aggravated by something, which each night persistently occurs, and which I try all day to recall to memory; at times I just touch the border—it is like trying to grasp the luminous tail of a comet—it is but empty air." He suddenly paused, evidently annoyed that he had been betrayed into an expression of his feelings. James sat up, instantly interested: "Can you not concentrate your mind, and thus trace the sequence of that which you do remember? Is it a dream—or—or——"

"It is nothing! I tell you it is nothing!" said Henry testily.

James said no more, but he knew that there was something which Henry either could not, or would not explain. Later, as Henry was starting for home, James laid his hand on his shoulder and said, "I think I will go home with you, and we will have a quiet smoke together, it will soothe your nerves, and perhaps you will sleep better."

At first Henry shrugged his shoulders impatiently, and made a movement as though he would jerk away from his detaining hand; but as James continued speaking he seemed to change his mind, and said slowly: "Very well! I do not often smoke, but perhaps it would quiet my nerves," Aunt Hattie bade him a very crusty good-night; she had been very sarcastic, and ill-natured all the evening; it seemed to make her angry if either Marjy or Henry showed any enjoyment; she seemed equally angry if they sat silent and unhappy.

"Oh, auntie, you ought not to be so ill-natured!" said Marjy after they had gone.

"Oh, of course, I am the one to blame! If I lost everything I possess on earth, I ought to keep right on smiling—I should like to know what James went home with Henry for? some scheming, I suppose!" she harped upon these two strings until it was very trying.

James locked his arm in Henry's, talking pleasantly, Henry replying absently as though he but half-comprehended.

As I have said his rooms were in the front

part of the house; he pulled down the blinds, and lighted a lamp with a soft, rose-colored shade, and threw himself into an easy-chair with an air of great weariness. James seated himself at his right side, but with his chair so turned that he could watch Henry's face. He led him gently on, until, before he realized what he was doing, he was pouring all his distress and grief into his companion's ear, in a low, dreamy tone, an aggrieved quiver running through his voice.

"Can you explain what it is that haunts your mind—you remember that you spoke of it this evening?" questioned James.

The trouble deepened in his eyes, and his voice took on a more fretful tone: "I do not know, I tell you the truth, I do not know—but it is something about that combination, and—Aunt Hattie; sometimes I can almost see it; but before I can quite grasp it, it is gone. I believe that I shall go insane, if I cannot get the thing off my mind."

James reached over and laid his hand on the other's shoulder affectionately: "Don't worry, old fellow! It will all come out right! Did you ever try to bring the vision before you by concentrating your mind upon the fragment which you seem to catch—not at first trying to get any further—and thus ascertain how much of the shadow you can make real? When you have proved that the haunting remembrance is not wholly illusory, you can then step by step trace back to that which evades you. Henry obediently rested his head on the cushion, and drew a long breath or two like a tired sigh.

"Well, what do you see?" asked James eagerly.

He answered in the tone of a child repeating its lesson: "I see a bright light—" he started up excitedly: "I cannot see anything beyond except a moving shadow—Oh! It is myself that I see!" his voice expressive of intense surprise.

"Yes? What are you doing?" James asked, trembling with excitement.

"Standing in the middle of the room, repeating the combination aloud—over and over again, making Aunt Hattie repeat it after me."

"Where is Aunt Hattie?"

"In her sitting room."

"How do you see this?"

"It is like a picture! This is that which has eluded me for days—I see it plainly now."

"Repeat the scene just as it has been enacted before."

Henry slowly arose from his chair, and walked to the center of the room; here he paused undecidedly.

"Well, what is wrong?"

Very slowly he answered, "I do not know—I —do—not—know."

James looked puzzled; at last he asked: "Do you mean that you cannot do again that which you have before accomplished—that some peculiar condition is wanting?"

Henry merely repeated helplessly, "I—do—not—know; it is all dark! I cannot find—Aunt —Hattie!" in tone of great distress.

James looked perplexed: "Sit down in your chair," he said. Henry obeyed, and presently

James awoke him; he stretched out his arms, yawning sleepily. "I feel awfully tired, suppose we go to bed!" Evidently he had no remembrance of the hypnotic sleep.

They at once retired; Henry sank immediately into a profound slumber, but James lay for a long time troubling over an idea which had taken possession of his mind. He did not believe Henry guilty of stealing the money, but he believed that he was shielding the person who did take it. Could it be Marjy? The thought made the cold sweat start out on his face; the next instant, when he remembered Marjy's frank eyes as she appealed to him to try his hypnotic power over Henry, he felt ashamed of the thought; her idea was merely to tease Henry for his strenuous opposition to it, if he could be made to succumb to the influence; but James had an altogether different idea, which he did not mention; as I have said, he believed that Henry knew more about the money than he professed to know. Now, after his experiment, he was completely at a loss; he could form no opinion. He was surprised that he found him so easy a subject; it was perhaps owing to his mental depression, and consequent relaxation of will power.

James had said to Marjy that afternoon, "Perhaps Henry did take the money!"

"I know that he did not!" she answered hotly.

"How do you know that?"

"Just because I do know; I cannot explain how I know, but I know it!"

James, watching the flush in her cheek, was thinking how becoming a touch of anger was to

her, but he laughed gayly as he replied: "Woman's reason; logical of course; just because!"

This returned to him as he lay there too perplexed to sleep. "She is right about it; he did not take the money, or else he would have betrayed it; and this knocks my theory all to pieces, as well; he would have told if he knew who did take it. Confound the whole business! What is it to me, that I should worry over it?" He turned restlessly in the bed, trying to get to sleep.

Presently Henry began to mutter. James grumbled at this fresh annoyance. "I had best have stayed at home," he said.

Henry lifted himself upon his elbow, whispering rapidly.

"That confounded combination!" exclaimed James in disgust, as he turned over to look at Henry; he caught his breath in surprise.

Slowly, slowly Henry arose, his lips moving rapidly, as a child repeats its lesson to impress it upon his mind. His eyes were widely opened, but with a curious introverted look; he stepped slowly forward, a look of concentration on his ghastly features; he walked to the center of the room exactly where he had before stood; there he paused as though listening: "Aunt Hattie! Aunt Hattie!" he called clearly and distinctly; although the tone was very low, as one speaks who is desirous of being heard by none save the person addressed.

James jumped out of bed, bringing his hands together softly. "I wonder if it is possible!" he

cried, quivering with excitement; he hurried on his clothes and fairly flew down the stairs, and let himself into Aunt Hattie's house.

As he passed the sitting room he cautiously pushed aside the *portières*. Aunt Hattie was on her knees before the safe, repeating the combination in almost exactly the tone in which Henry had spoken. James dashed up the stairs and knocked softly at Marjy's door.

"Who's there?" she called in a frightened tone.

"It's I, James; open the door, Marjy; do not be frightened, but hurry!" Marjy opened the door as requested.

"Oh, what is it?" her voice trembling.

"Nothing which need frighten you. I have found the thief, come!"

Marjy had not disrobed, but was lying on the bed reading, and immediately followed him. He hastily whispered an explanation as they hurried down the stairs; in conclusion he said: "Now, I want you to watch auntie, and see just what she does; I will go back and watch Henry's movements; he appears like a sleep walker, and auntie seems to be hypnotized. It's a queer performance, take it as you will."

Marjy was white and trembling; half afraid, and wholly excited. They drew aside the draperies, auntie had all the papers contained in the safe on the floor, and was now rummaging in every corner as though searching for some missing thing; muttering, muttering to herself all the time.

James hurried back to Henry's rooms, and left

Marjy breathlessly watching Aunt Hattie, who was carefully gathering up the scattered papers, and putting them back in their several places; she then closed and locked the safe.

"Oh!" breathed Marjy, in keen disappointment; she had surely thought that she should know where the money was, and her disappointment was great. She was about to turn away and go to her room, she felt so vexed, when her steps were arrested by hearing her aunt say—as though replying to some person:

"Yes, I will! I forgot—Oh, yes! All right!" and with a quick decided step she walked across the room to a great easy-chair; this she carefully turned upon its side; removed one of the casters, and pulled some bills out of the cavity; she appeared to count them carefully, after which she replaced them, putting the caster in the socket as it belonged. Each one was examined in turn, then with a sigh the chair was placed in its proper position and she sank into its depths with the audible words: "Yes, Henry; it is all right!"

Marjy shivered with superstitious awe; silence unbroken reigned save for the ticking of the clock, and the breathing of Aunt Hattie, as she lay back in the chair looking strangely cadaverous.

James quietly let himself into Henry's room; he still stood like a specter in the middle of the floor; the red glow of the lamp cast a weird light over his pale features, his expression was fixed and intent; his face was turned slightly sidewise, and he held up one hand as one who listens intently: "Yes, that is right; place everything

as you found it, and go to your bed!" As he ceased speaking he turned toward his own bed, rested a moment on its edge, then lay down, and drew the covers over himself as though just retiring; he was soon breathing deeply, and like one in natural slumber.

James threw himself into a chair, and slowly puffed a cigar and thought; finally he arose and yawning stretched his limbs. "I'll see if Marjy has retired; I think I understand this queer tangle, but I'm blest if I understand how to straighten it out!"

He quietly let himself out of the house, and as quietly entered auntie's front door; Marjy met him in the hall, and drew him into the sitting room.

"Where is auntie?" he asked.

"Gone to her bed; do tell me what happened in Henry's room!" she said eagerly. She sat looking at him wide-eyed and wondering, while he related all that had occurred.

"Well, tell me, what do you think of it?" she questioned.

He thoughtfully rolled his cigar in his fingers for a few minutes before replying. "I do not quite know; Henry was certainly asleep. Now the question is just this; could he hypnotize your aunt at such a distance, himself being in a somnambulistic state?"

"I do not think that he is conscious of possessing hypnotic power," said Marjy.

"No, he would doubtless be indignant if one suggested such a thing; but he certainly has that power, and really, I cannot see why he could

not use the force just as well in that state as though awake, so long as his mind intelligently directed it; the will power is just as strong as at any time."

"It is all very strange! Now that we know where the money is, what are we to do about it?"

"I suppose the proper thing to do would be to tell Aunt Hattie all about to-night's free show!" and he laughed at the recollection.

"I should really be afraid to tell Aunt Hattie; in her present mood there is no saying what she would, or would not do," said Marjy.

James replied thoughtfully: "That is true; we had best sleep over it; we will talk it over again in the morning."

James did not return to Henry's room, he wished to be alone, that he might better solve the problem which confronted him.

He arose the following morning tired, worn out with sleeplessness, and no nearer a solution than when he retired.

Auntie was in a terrible ill humor, the atmosphere seemed surcharged with discord; throughout the whole day everything seemed to go amiss. Marjy was burning with a desire to tell her aunt, alternated with a shivering fear of her disbelief, and consequent sarcastic remarks. James made a vain endeavor to see Henry; no one knew his whereabouts all day; late in the evening he came to the house, looking pale and dispirited. Marjy clasped his hand in cordial greeting; this elicited an angry ejaculation from Aunt Hattie, beyond which she gave no sign that she knew of his presence.

James and Marjy sat looking over some stereoptic views to cover their desire to watch the two, and both were trying to find a suitable opportunity to bring up the subject of the lost money, so as to be able to explain how they came by their knowledge of the hiding place. The attitude of both Henry and auntie was such as to discourage a commencement. At last James wrote on a card: "You will have to tell them; I will corroborate your account."

Marjy replied: "Oh, I cannot. It makes me shiver to think of it; they both look so forbidding."

Henry sat on the corner of a sofa, with his eyes fixed intently on Aunt Hattie; they did not observe this until she arose and stood beside her chair as though waiting; her lips were moving rapidly but inaudibly. Henry, still looking fixedly at her, said slowly: "Speak aloud!" She began repeating the combination, and step by step went through the performance of the previous night, until she had taken the money from its hiding place. Henry at that moment, pale and resolute—though trembling with excitement—commanded her to awaken.

It was most pitiable to see her when she realized her situation; the overturned chair; the casters lying on the floor; the bills grasped in her shaking hands; Marjy and James silently regarding her; Henry, with a look of exhaustion on his face, lay back among the dark cushions. At first she was utterly bewildered; then, as she looked at the bills grasped in her hands, a ray of joy, quickly succeeded by anger, gave her

voice: "You think you are awful smart, don't you? Playing tricks on an old woman! I should like to know what you have been doing to me!" she stormed; then looking at the open safe, and the bills in her hand she began to sob weakly.

"Don't cry, auntie, it is all right!" said Marjy soothingly.

"No, no! It isn't right! I remember now—of hiding that money; and to think that I have accused Henry and you of taking it—Oh, dear! Oh, dear!" sobbed she; "I did not remember it until now!" she wailed disconsolately.

Henry came and laid his hand upon her shoulder: "Do not fret, auntie; I think there is no one to blame, if so, it must be my fault. I have always been a somnambulist, and always been ashamed of it—as though I could help it; but I had no idea that I possessed any hypnotic power; in fact I did not believe in the existence of such a force—at least I did not wish to believe it—which in all probability is just what led to this occurrence. You remember that we were speaking of hypnotism the night of the disappearance of the money; Marjy defended the theory, and I opposed it in order to draw her out; some assertions which she made struck me as being very forcible, and I could not rid myself of the thoughts engendered, any more than I could get rid of the repetition of that combination. It has been like a nightmare to me, and each day there had been a shadow of some occurrence of the past night which has persistently evaded me. I have been haunted all this day by something

which occurred last night, which seemed like a vivid dream, and I thought I would put it to the test. You cannot be more surprised at the result than I am."

James and Marjy now came forward: "I think that Marjy and I will also have to make confession; I think that your being able to recall a portion of last night's events was due to the slight influence which I gained over you; I tried to impress it upon your mind that you must remember what occurred, but I thought that I had failed completely." He then made a complete explanation, which Marjy fully corroborated. Auntie laughed and sobbed in the same breath: "I've been an old crank; but the uncertainty worried me so that I could not help it—and my part of the general confession is that a sense of knowledge—which I could not grasp—tormented me continually, but I would not have confessed it for twice that amount of money. However, "All's well that ends well." Marjy, you may have the money to buy a wedding trousseau, and when Henry is my nephew I trust that he will not hypnotize his old aunt, either when he is sleeping or waking."

HIS FRIEND.

The two log cabins stood on the grassy slopes of opposite mountains, the dark piñons forming a picturesque background; a babbling brook ran between the two, a boundary line of molten silver.

Sam Nesterwood's door faced north, and Phil Boyd's door looked south; while they were building the cabins Phil remarked that it looked so much more sociable that way.

When Phil came out in the morning to plunge his wind-browned face into the tin wash basin, filled with cold water from the stream below, he usually saw Sam doing the same; or perhaps, taking the grimy towel off the wooden peg just outside the door, with which he scrubbed his face, and even the tiny bald spot on the top of his head, to a shiny red.

Phil came out as usual one still October morning; the cottonwoods were just turning a soft golden color—fairy gold—in a setting of dark green and gray—autumn's gorgeous mosaic.

A chipmunk darted saucily by, and just beyond reach sat up chattering a comical defiance; a lone bluebell nodded in the wind, swaying from side to side seeking its vanished companions; blood-red leaves peeped out from under dry grasses, or decked the sides of a gray bowlder.

Phil looked cheerfully around; he snapped his fingers at the saucy squirrel, and laughed at the blinking, black eyes; looking across at the opposite cabin he bawled, "Hello, Sam!"

"Hello yourself!" retorted Sam. This had been the morning salutation, never varied, though all the summer months. Each evening after their day's work they met at one or the other cabin to compare rock; to talk over a lucky strike, or the mishap of a mutual acquaintance, not that much sympathy was expended or needed.

"Jim's claim has petered out; he's out about six months' work, and all his money."

"You don't say! Oh, well, Jim won't stay broke very long; he's a hustler." It was not from want of sympathy, but because of a confidence begotten of this hard life, much as the sparrow might argue, "having never wanted for food, I shall be always fed."

Later in the morning Phil climbed the steep trail which led to his claim high upon the mountain side. The days were perceptibly growing shorter, and it was quite dark when he came down this October evening. Halfway down the trail he thought he heard a groan.

His halting foot dislodged a stone, and sent it crashing down the mountain side; the rushing sound of a night hawk overhead; the melancholy hoot of an owl in the piñons; the bark of a coyote in the distance, all seemed but to accentuate the silence.

As I have said, night had fallen, coming suddenly, as it ever does in the mountains; no

dewy, tender twilight as in lower altitudes; the sun hanging low in the western sky seems phantasm-like to drop behind the distant peaks; a chill wind whistles through the piñons like a softly sung dirge; darkness settles down like a pall—and it is night.

Phil thought that he must be mistaken, and again started on his homeward way; the groaning was repeated almost at his very feet.

He searched vainly, but could find no person, nothing to account for the sound.

Dead silence had fallen again. Phil shivered, "This wind is mighty cold!" he muttered, his hand shaking, his teeth inclined to chatter. He took off his hat to wipe the perspiration from his brow, which had gathered in great drops notwithstanding the chill wind; he cast a furtive glance behind him; it was all so terribly uncanny. "Oh! O—h!" came again at his very feet; he gave a frightened start, and an involuntary ejaculation: "Great God!" then gathered himself together and renewed his search, this time rewarded by finding Sam lying under the shelter of a rock badly wounded.

It was a hard task to carry him down that steep trail, and Phil said, pityingly, many times, "It's awful rough, pard, but there's no help for it."

He carried him into the cabin, and laying him on his bed, built a fire, and with a touch gentle as that of a woman bathed and dressed his wound.

He found that a bullet had plowed a ragged furrow down his leg, and shattered the smaller bone halfway between the knee and the ankle.

Phil had a little knowledge of surgery; these nomads of the hills are often far from surgical aid, and of a necessity attain a degree of skill in such matters. Having made his patient as comfortable as possible, Phil lay down on the floor, rolled in a single blanket, to rest until morning.

. . . . . .

The autumn days crept by in drowsy calm—a stillness deeper and more sad than in lower altitudes; the whistle of the late bird as he calls to his mate to hasten their migration is unheard here; the shrill notes of the cicada, which fills the autumn days in the moist, odorous woods is unknown in these barren heights; the dry, stubbly bunch grass, the gray, dusty sage brush harbors no insect life save an occasional lonely cricket, and even these are strangely silent. No birds flit from tree to tree save the magpies, with their gorgeous black and white plumage, and their harsh discordant cries, and these are only seen along the streams. An occasional hawk sails above the piñons in graceful curves, or darts downward like an arrow shot from a bow. All else is silent and lifeless.

The sun lies white and brilliant over all; the long shadows lie on the gray ground as though painted there; the tiny streams hurry between their rocky banks, as though in haste to get away from a too cloudless sky.

Long stretches of hills rise and fall away, dry, desolate and gray; a wierd loneliness and beauty lies over all—the grandeur of desolation.

The leaves had fluttered down to the bare earth, and a few flakes of snow had been tossed

about by the nipping wind, ere Sam Nesterwood was able to tell the story of his accident. He was riding up the trail to a claim he thought of relocating; he considered the broncho he rode "all right," but some reminiscence of his forefathers, some prompting of the wild blood which is never wholly subdued, must have possessed the animal, for without the slightest warning, head down, back arched like an angry cat, he bucked outrageously.

Sam was too good a rider to be easily thrown, but the unexpected movement threw his pistol from his belt; it struck the pommel of the saddle, discharging its contents into his leg, and although it felt as though red-hot iron tore through the flesh, he still retained his seat; then he must have fainted, for he knew no more until near nightfall. When consciousness returned he was lying on the ground; he felt chilled through, and his limb was so stiff and sore that he could scarcely move. He sought to get nearer to a large rock for shelter from the cold wind; it had by this time grown quite dusk, and beneath the rock was so dark that he could not see, thus he rolled into the hole beneath, where Phil found him.

During all the time of Sam's illness, Phil each day climbed the rugged trail to work for a neighboring miner, letting his own assessment work wait, while he earned the money to pay doctor's bills, buy medicines; supply Sam with books to read, and delicacies to tempt his appetite. Phil denied himself all but the barest subsistence. Sam smoked cigars, read books,

and ate the most expensive delicacies, as though such things where no more than his right.

Thus affairs went on until near the beginning of February. Sam was practically well, but he made no effort to get about.

Phil had bought a great easy-chair for him in the first stages of his convalescence, and he sat in the coziest corner, and piled the fireplace high with wood, although Phil had to "snake" it more than half a mile down the steep mountain side.

. . . . . .

It was a bitter night; the wind blew bleak over the hills, driving the little snow that had fallen before it, so many needle like points, which left the face stinging with pain. Just at nightfall it had grown warmer, and the scudding clouds began to drop their fleecy burden, a fairy mantle over all the rugged hills.

Phil came home covered with snow, his long mustache ridiculously lengthened by icicles, his eyebrows white as those of Father Time.

He set his lunch pail down moodily, and shook himself much as a spaniel shakes the water from his shaggy coat; he threw himself on a bench before the fire with a tired sigh; and rested his elbows on his knees, his chin dropped in his upturned palms.

Sam shivered as some of the flying particles of snow struck him.

"Can't you be a little more careful; you'll give me my death of cold yet!" he grumbled.

"I did not intend to wet you," answered Philip very gently, not changing his position.

"You must be down in the dumps! What is the matter with you?" said Sam irritably.

This habit of half-grumbling and fault-finding had become so common with Sam that Phil made no reply. After a minute's silence, he began again:

"Aren't we going to have any supper to-night? It's most infernal monotonous sitting here alone all day with nothing to read, and not even a square meal."

Phil arose wearily, and began laying the cloth on the table; soon the bacon was sizzling merrily, the teakettle bumping the lid up and down for very joy, and the fragrance of coffee filled the room.

Phil took from the box nailed against the wall a small dish of peaches, a couple of slices of cake, and a little cheese, which he put beside Sam's plate.

"Supper is ready," said he gravely.

Sam arose lazily, and Phil wheeled his easy-chair up to the table; then poured out the coffee, and drew up his own rough bench. He offered a slice of the bacon to Sam, before helping himself.

"No," said Sam testily, "I'm tired of bacon. I hate the very smell of it. I do wish I could have something decent to eat!"

Phil made no reply, but ate his bread and bacon, and drank his coffee in silence. Sam leaned back in his chair, his head resting on the cushion, and looked at Phil from under half-closed eyelids. "Your countenance is an appetizer! You are about as cheerful as a tomb-

stone!" a curious anxiety underlying his sneering tone.

As Phil did not reply, he continued: "Can't you open your clam shell, and spit out your grievance? I suppose I have offended your saintship in some way, 'though what I've done except to stay all alone and put up with all sorts of discomforts is more than I know," the questioning tone in the first part of his speech shading off into a sullen grumbling toward the end.

Phil lifted his gloomy face.

"I have given you no reason for that kind of talk; I can't grin very much when some galoot has jumped my claim," he replied slowly.

"You don't say! Who the deuce——"

"The name marked on the new stake is Jim Redmond, but that don't count much," answered Phil despondently.

"I suppose you think I'd be sneak enough to do it," retorted Sam, the strange, questioning look deepening in his eyes.

"Oh, come off, Sam! What is the use of talking that kind of stuff? I'm not quite so suspicious as that; why, you haven't been up the trail in months," answered Phil, with a kindly look.

"No; and my name is not Jim Redmond; but you ought to have done your assessment work; you can't very well blame him, whoever he may be."

"No; p'raps not," said Phil slowly, and it seemed somewhat doubtingly; then he added: "What makes me sore is that it was looking so good. Well, there's no use in wearing

mourning, I suppose;" and he tried to laugh cheerfully. After supper, notwithstanding the inclemency of the night Phil trudged patiently the long six miles into town, that Sam might have the coveted books, and a tender steak for his breakfast.

Sam evinced no desire to return to his own cabin; on the contrary he said, in his peculiarly soft tones, "I guess we'd better finish the winter together, had't we, Phil? I'm not very strong yet, and one fire will do for both; of course I'll put up my share of the grub."

"Oh, that's all right; I'm glad of your company," replied Phil.

Sam must have considered his company a sufficient compensation, for he contributed nothing toward the expense of living; he took the most and the best of everything; the choicest of the food; the only chair; the warmest corner of the fireplace; and the only good bed. If he ever saw Phil's self denial, he made no sign. If Phil ever thought him selfish, he did not show it; that which he gave he gave royally.

One evening Phil came in from work; it was bitter cold; the stars snapped and twinkled; the frost showed a million glittering points in the white moonlight; the ground cracked like tiny pistol shots; the wind whistled shrilly, and cut like a whiplash.

Phil shook himself, and threw off his cap and coat:

"This is a scorcher and no mistake," he stretched out his hands basking in the warmth.

Sam had hovered over the fire all day, reading.

He leaned back in his chair, a tantalizing light in his eyes.

"You've been working the Mollie Branscome," he asserted, rather than asked.

Phil nodded his head. Sam continued: "I say, Phil, is Mollie Branscome your sweetheart, that you named your claim after her?"

Phil colored painfully, but after a minute he replied dryly: "It must be information you're seekin'; I wasn't aware that it concerned anyone but myself."

Sam laughed sneeringly.

"Awful close with your little romance!"

To Phil it was a romance; and in giving the name to his claim he but obeyed the impulse to have it ever on his lips. "Mollie," his manner of speaking it was ever a caress.

Sam laughed, and passed the remark off as a joke.

One day Sam brought Phil a letter from his old father, asking him to come home, as he was very ill and wished to see him once more before he died. Phil turned the letter over thoughtfully, and Sam hastened to say: "I tried to get on to the horse, and he jumped sideways and dumped the whole pile of mail into the dirt; it's an awful mess, but I couldn't help it," apologetically.

"Oh 't wasn't that! but the old man's writing don't look natural. I am afraid he is pretty bad." He pulled his mustache thoughtfully for a few minutes.

"I don't just see how I can manage it. I have

just about money enough to get there, but none to return," said he.

Sam leaned back in his chair, blowing a long cloud of smoke meditatively. Finally he said: "I had an offer for the Little Darling this morning; you go, if you want to, and I'll make the deal, and send you a fifty; you can pay it after you come back."

Phil's face lit up with a pleasant smile.

"Sam, it's awful good of you!" he exclaimed impulsively.

"Oh, I'm always willing to do a favor when I can," nonchalantly, seeming to be utterly forgetful of all that Phil had done for him; unmindful that at this very moment he was smoking Phil's tobacco, warming himself at Phil's fire, and this moment contemplating the eating of the food of Phil's providing. His manner of speaking would imply that this was but one more of many benefits of his conferring.

As Phil was leaving to go to his father, Sam said:

"I'll take good care of everything for you."

"All right! thanks, and good-by!" called Phil heartily.

Phil's father was very much surprised to see him; no message had been sent; and he was well but none the less glad to see Phil.

Phil wrote to Sam at once, but as he received no reply wrote again and again.

He did not need money, as his father had given him more than enough, but he feared that some ill had befallen his friend.

As Phil left the stagecoach on his return

home, three months later, he at once sought Mollie; he had received no letter from her during his absence, although he had repeatedly written. He knocked, and Mollie herself opened the door. Phil reached out his hand in glad greeting; she drew back coldly.

"Is there anything you wish, sir?" as she would address a stranger.

Phil's face flushed hotly, then went deadly pale. He looked at her reproachfully.

"I think not," he replied sadly, as he turned away.

With natures such as these a tragedy may occur unobserved by the bystander.

To Phil the sun seemed to have set, all looked so dark and gloomy. As he swung off over the lonely mountain trail, the gurgling water in the brook below seemed to mock him; the scent of the springing vegetation caused a feeling of irritation, his heart was so full of bitter disappointment.

Lonely and more lonely grew the way; no life save himself, he just a dark speck upon that yellow trail crawling up the mountain side. Even his panting breath seemed to disturb the dead calm, as he paused—taking off his hat—to look up to his cabin. He shaded his eyes, and looked eagerly. Only a blackened spot marked where his home—humble, but still a home—had stood. He looked higher up the side of the mountain to where the Mollie Branscome lay; he drew his breath sharply; where he had left a windlass and bucket, a frame shafthouse arose. The sharp spurt of steam rising on the

fast chilling air denoted a perfectly set valve; he saw hurrying forms of men at work; he shut his teeth hard together, a fiery red spot rising in either cheek. He felt neither fatigue nor depression now; he breathed stertoriously as he toiled up the steep trail.

Sam was the first person that he met.

Phil pointed to a name above the shafthouse door: "The New Discovery." "What does that mean?" he demanded hoarsely.

"What's it to you?" answered Sam derisively.

Poor Phil! His blood seemed on fire. The sneer; the taunting look; it was like letting a brilliant light shine into a dark place; he knew by that 'sixth sense,' intuition, all the treachery of this false friend. He knew who had sent him upon a fool's errand; he knew who had stolen his first claim, and had some accomplice mark the stake in a false name; a memory of his systematic sponging for more than half a year goaded him to madness; many, very many acts, before unconsidered, came to his mind fraught with meaning. The veins on his forehead stood out like purple cord, and he made a wild lunge at Sam. Sam turned to run; he stepped on a rolling stone and went down helplessly; he lay there glaring up at Phil, fear and vindictive hatred strangely blent in his gaze.

Phil stood over him like an avenger:

"So! You thought to rob me of this claim as you did of the other, did you?" his voice quivering hoarsely.

"You've got me down, now strike me!" an-

swered Sam, his eyes glaring wildly, his teeth showing like those of a wild animal. "Yes, I did jump your claim; and I've got the papers to show for the Mollie Branscome; the Mollie Branscome! You thought you were awful sly, but I jumped that claim too; your letters to her put me on. She thinks you went East to marry your old love; *we* are going to be married to-morrow night!" he cried tauntingly; he seemed to have gone insane with rage.

As Phil listened to him the fierce anger died out of his face, and contempt took its place; but he only ejaculated:

"You contemptible cur!" as he stepped back and folded his arms.

The workmen had gathered about, and stood in silent amazement; their looks seemed to anger Sam still more, and he continued his insane taunting:

"Oh, you wanted me to take care of your things, didn't you? I took care of them, oh, yes!" and he thrust his tongue in his cheek derisively.

He had risen to his feet by this time, and stood leaning his back against the shafthouse. Phil stood a minute without speaking, pity struggling with contempt in his heart; finally he said slowly, and without a trace of anger:

"Well! You're slopping over pretty freely. If you burned my cabin thinking to destroy my papers, you got left; I took them with me, and you must have forgotten that they are recorded. As to the other affair which you have tangled with your dirty fingers, I think that I can

straighten that out all right. You are too contemptible to whip, but I advise you to make yourself scarce."

"I believe he did burn that cabin, because no one has ever been inside of *his* shack since the fire; probably he has some things there that he'd rather not have seen. I always thought that things looked mighty queer," said big Cal Wagner.

"Let's all quit work. I'll not strike another stroke for the likes of 'im," said Denny Colby.

"Say, aren't you the fellow that took care of this skunk when he was hurt?" asked Cal.

"Yes," tersely replied Phil.

"Well, you'd better git up and dust, you miserable apology for a man!" cried Cal, indignantly turning to Sam.

"And he made out that you had skipped the country, and that he bought the claim, so that you needn't go dead broke. If he don't leave it's a necktie party we'll be havin'!" added Denny Colby.

"Oh, let him alone, boys; he isn't worth the rope it would take to hang him; upon my word I pity him, he is so *con*temptible that I don't think he can enjoy his own company," drawled Phil lazily.

Sam limped away unmolested, cursing wildly as far as they could hear him.

Phil turned from looking after him, and said to the men, "It makes me feel pretty sore, but I guess that he feels worse'n I do," he added philosophically. After a few minutes he continued, "You might as well knock off for the

rest of the day, I don't suppose he will give me any trouble because he knows that I have the papers to prove my right. I'll square whatever wages is coming to you as soon as I get things in good shape."

A hearty grasp of the hand, and a ready acquiesence sealed the compact.

Phil swung himself down the mountain side in a much more joyous mood than when ascending.

He walked direct to Mollie's house, and as before she opened the door; she started in surprise and anger; he did not wait for her to speak, but said in a determined tone, "You asked me this morning if there was anything that I wished, and not understanding the circumstances I said no; I have since learned some things which caused me to change my mind—Mollie, would you condemn me unheard?" reaching out both hands.

She, flushing and trembling, stood irresolute for one minute, then placed her hands in his.

"No, that would not be just; but why did you not write?"

"I did write several times, but could get no reply from you."

"I wonder—" she commenced, but Phil cut the sentence short.

"Were you going to marry Sam, Mollie?"

"What an idea! That conceited thing!" answered Mollie indignantly.

They had entered the little parlor, and Phil caught her in his arms and said quizzically, "What about me?"

Just what Mollie answered I had best not re-

peat, but it seemed to be perfectly satisfactory, as he left the house an hour later, whistling as happily as a boy.

. . . . . .

Just after dark Sam hurried into town, cursing his lameness and Phil, indiscriminately; he wanted to keep things square with Mollie, as he expressed it.

As he came near the house he observed that the little parlor was brilliantly lighted; his heart filled with exultation: "I'll bet Mollie is expecting me! Let Phil keep his old claims; the girl is worth more than all of them; it will hurt him most to lose her, too. Of course it was all a lie about our going to be married; but I can get her all right, you bet there isn't many women but that I could get!" with a ridiculous air of importance.

He knocked confidently, and was at once ushered into the midst of a number of guests. Coming as he did, from the darkness, the glare of the lights blinded him; but as he advanced into the room, Cal Wagner said, "We were waiting for you, sir. Please be seated."

Turning to the group near the center of the room, he continued, "Reverend sir, this is the guest we were expecting; will you now proceed with the ceremony."

Looking radiantly happy, Mollie and Phil took their places in front of the minister, and the solemn marriage service commenced.

Sam made a bolt for the door; but Cal's great hand closed over his shoulder like a vise, and he was compelled to stand and see his last shred of

revenge slip away from him, amid the happy smiles of those around him.

Then he crept out into the darkness, out of the ken of those who knew him, blaming everybody but himself, yet at war with himself and all the world, because he had not succeeded in ill-doing.

Phil said to his wife: "I am sorry for him; I wish he had been content to be my friend; I did like Sam."

Of course there was not the slightest opposition to Phil's assuming control of his own property, but his conscience troubled him because Sam had built the shafthouse: "I had much rather have paid him for it," he remarked; but when later he learned that neither lumber nor labor were paid for, and all bought upon his credit, he had no more regrets.

A TALE OF THE X RAY.

Christopher Hembold had a mania for experimenting.

He had tried everything from hypnotism to electricity, when the "X" ray was first talked about. He could think or talk of nothing else; he perused every magazine and paper with greedy avidity in search of articles concerning it.

"Christopher, do put that paper down and eat your breakfast," said his wife.

Mrs. Hembold was a nervous little woman, and it annoyed her to hear the newspaper rattle, and she disliked to have it held so as to hide her Christopher from view.

"But, Maria, just listen, here's more about that wonderful discovery—" he exclaimed excitedly.

"Christopher Hembold! Eat your breakfast! I care much more that the steak and coffee are getting cold than I do for that nonsense."

"You have no sympathy, Maria; the mysteries of science are beyond your appreciation!" he exclaimed, as he folded the paper in dignified displeasure.

"Appreciate fiddlesticks!" angrily retorted Maria, stirring her coffee vigorously.

Said Christopher, the next morning at the breakfast table:

"Maria, I am going to Abbeyville on business, and shall in all probability be detained a month."

"What business have you in Abbeyville?" asked Maria in surprise.

"It is business of a private nature, which you wouldn't understand," answered he loftily.

"Which is a polite way of telling me that it is none of my business," retorted Maria in a huff.

Christopher left the house in dignified anger; his portly figure and handsome profile the admiration of his wrathful wife. The fact was, he did not wish to talk; he had determined that he would investigate the "X" ray to his own satisfaction. A certain idea haunted him by day, and mingled with his dreams at night; it thrust itself between him and the long columns in the ledger; until, with a finger on the figures, he would fix his eyes on vacancy, and go off into a deep study.

At last Mr. Brown, his employer, said to him:

"What is the matter with you Christopher? Are you ill?"

"No—yes—not very," answered Christopher confusedly.

"You had better take a layoff until you feel better," said Brown; adding mentally, "You are of no use here; you'll mix those accounts until it will take an expert a week to straighten them."

Christopher packed his grip with a sigh of satisfaction, and left home on the evening train.

Maria gave a little regretful sigh. "He might have kissed me; he didn't even say good-by."

She presently began thinking how preoccupied he looked, and how strange he had acted.

"I do wonder if he was in trouble! I ought not have been so cross, but he should have told me; so there!" After a minute of troubled thought, she added: "Perhaps he didn't want to worry me."

Whenever Christopher was present she must give him a dig as often as the opportunity occurred; but no sooner was he away than all his good qualities became apparent.

Instead of stopping at Abbeyville, Christopher hastened on to a city more than a thousand miles away. "I'll just call myself John Smith, and I shall not be bothered while making my investigations," said he complacently.

The next morning after his arrival he sought out the noted Professor Blank, and at some length explained his project; in conclusion he said:

"You understand that I wish to be cathodographed many times; the working of the brain has always been a tantalizing puzzle to me. What I wish to search out is, how the different emotions affect the gray matter; for instance, it is claimed that this bump is combativeness;" placing his hand on the region indicated. "It is also claimed that all qualities, whether good or bad, are capable of being cultivated; that the bump indicating that trait or quality grows perceptibly larger; well, then, the substance known as gray matter must undergo a change; whenever that emotion is unduly excited, the gray matter must quiver, vibrate; in fact change

position. Have you never felt as though your brain must burst with the intensity of emotion? I have; and am eager to test it with the 'X' ray." He paused as though for an answer, but receiving none, continued: "Now in order to test this, I wish to subject myself to every possible emotion, and in every change be photographed."

The professor smiled incredulously.

"How are you to obtain these changes of mood? such emotions usually come without our choosing."

"True! Well, I shall endeavor to create the emotion as I wish it."

The professor laughed aloud. "I think under such conditions that the emotion would be altogether too tame to have a visible effect on the brain."

Christopher resented the laughter: "Perhaps you are not willing to assist me in making my experiments?" he questioned angrily.

"Oh, yes; perfectly willing," was the smiling answer.

"Now, look here! I wish to investigate this carefully, and I'm willing and able to pay your price; but I'll not be ridiculed' sir, I'm no boy, I'll have you understand!"

"No, of course not," answered the professor soothingly, he thought him a mild lunatic; really he seemed half insane; no matter what reply the professor made, he grew more wroth, until he, out of all patience, said angrily: "What is the matter with you? You act like a maniac!"

"Quick! Quick! Photograph me!" cried Christopher, with livid lips.

"Well, well!" exclaimed the professor in astonishment, as he hastily complied with the request; after which Christopher sank back, pale and trembling.

The professor looked at him admiringly: "How did you accomplish it?"

"Oh, I don't know; I just let go of the strings;" smiling faintly.

Thus he went through the whole scale of emotions; he was taken while under the influence of anæsthetics; in a placid mood; in a moment of most uproarious hilarity; in the depths of despondency; in languishing amorousness; in fact, in all conceivable moods of the human mind. He seemed to possess the strange faculty of producing any desired emotion at will.

After he had exhausted all moods, he one day stood gazing meditatively, and rather sadly at the plates.

"Are you not satisfied?" asked the professor.

Christopher sighed deeply: "No, I cannot say that I am; it is certainly shown that there is a change, the exact nature of which is by no means clearly defined. Some future discovery will, I am sure, enable the scientist to see the action of the brain as plainly as we now know the action of the heart."

He nervously ran his fingers through his hair while speaking; he withdrew his hand with an exclamation of horror: it was covered with hairs and a cloud of the same enveloped him.

"Heaven! Is all my hair falling out?" he cried in dismay.

The professor calmly observed: "I have noticed it for some time; when you first came your mustache and eyebrows were very thick and long, but have been gradually thinning, I thought several times that I would speak of it, but we have had so much else to talk about, and the most of your moods have been so peculiar—" he smiled as he paused.

"Oh, it's all right for you to laugh! You wouldn't if you were in my shoes! Whatever will Maria say?"

He stood ruefully looking at his reflection in the mirror. "I look like a kid!" said he scornfully. "I have been so busy with this confounded foolishness that I did not think of looking in a glass. Pshaw! I'm going to drop this nonsense and go home; I know that my wife is worried about me before this time. I haven't written to her since I came here. I didn't want her to know what I was doing."

"You ought to have told her, though," said the professor.

"You don't know Maria!" said Christopher sadly. "Confound it! How my head aches! Now that I take time to think of it, I know that it has ached for a week."

The following morning Christopher was very ill, and was not able to leave his room for weeks. When at last he arose, he giddily crossed the room to the mirror, and looked at himself; he sank into a chair with a groan; not a vestige of hair remained on head or face.

He covered his long, leathery face with his hands, and cried aloud: "I look like a great

big sole-leather baby! Whatever will Maria say! I'll never tell her that it is the effect of that confounded "X" ray; if I did I should never hear the last of it; I've been sick, I am sick—sick of the whole business."

Meanwhile at home, Maria had at first reproached herself with her irritability, and finished by writing Christopher a loving, and penitent little note, which she sent to Abbeyville. Of course she received no reply.

"He must have been very angry," she sobbingly exclaimed.

She wrote again, a still more penitent and pleading letter; this not being answered, she became very indignant.

"If he wants to be so awfully huffy, let him!" she said wrathfully; but when a whole month passed, and no tidings came as to his whereabouts, she became alarmed, and began to institute cautious inquiries.

Of course, all search proved unavailing, and Maria wept and mourned her Christopher as dead.

Nearly five months from the day he left his home, Christopher wearily climbed the front steps of his own residence, and rang the bell. His clothing hung loosely on his gaunt limbs; his long, thin face was the color of leather; his eyes, devoid of lashes, and without eyebrows, looked perfectly lifeless.

Hannah, an old servant in the family, opened the door.

"If you want food go to the rear door," she cried sharply, as she shut him out unceremoniously.

He sat down on the upper step, pale and trembling.

"What does Hannah mean by insulting me thus? Can it be that Maria is so angry that she has ordered the servants torefuse me admittance?"

He mopped his forehead with his handkerchief, although the air was frosty and nipping. Presently he muttered to himself: I'll just stay around until Maria comes out, then I'll persuade her to forgive me. I've acted the fool, that's sure."

He walked up and down the street, and hung around corners, until the whole neighborhood were watching him.

About three in the afternoon, Maria came out of the house dressed in the deepest of mourning.

"I wonder who is dead; must be her father!" he shambled up to her, and laid his hand on her arm. "Ma—" he began; she gave a frightened scream, and started to run; he clutched her more frantically, and cried wildly: "Listen to me! you shall listen to me!"

She screamed again at the top of her voice: "Help! Murder! Police!"

A gentleman coming toward them, rushed up, and gave Christopher a stunning blow; Maria tore herself loose at the expense of much crape; ran back into the house, and locked the door after herself.

Christopher arose from the sidewalk and shuffled off down the street, muttering maledictions as he went. "It's all a conspiracy! She has got another lover, and thinks to get rid of me; she'll find that she can't do it so easily.

I'll wait until dark, and then let myself in with my latchkey; we'll see whether I am master in my own house or not."

He paced the street angrily until nightfall; stationing himself opposite, he then watched the house until all was dark and silent. Still another hour he waited: "I'll be sure that the servants are asleep, evidently they have orders to put me out, or Hannah would not have ordered me off as she did. I'll show them that they will not get the best of Christopher Hembold yet."

About eleven o'clock he cautiously crept up the steps, and as cautiously let himself in; just within he removed his boots; then carefully groped his way to Maria's room. Her door was unlocked, and by the dim light of the night lamp he saw her round white arm thrown above her head, thus framing her delicate face; the lace on her night robe rising and falling with every breath.

A rush of love and tenderness came over him; this was his Maria—the dainty bride whom he had transplanted from her father's home; he knelt beside the bed, enfolding her in his arms, and pressed a passionate kiss upon her half-parted lips. She opened wide her affrighted eyes; she struggled wildly, letting out one piercing shriek, then fainted. The half-clad servants came running into the room, finding Christopher on his knees beside the bed, chafing Maria's hands, kissing her pale face, and fondly calling her: "My love! My little one!"

Thomas, the coachman, seized him by the shoulders; Maria regaining consciousness, be-

gan screaming again; Hannah added to the confusion by crying excitedly, "Throw him out! Call the police! The man is crazy!" Thomas obeyed the first command; he dragged Christopher down the stairs, opened the door, and kicked him out, and down the steps.

He lay there a few minutes, completely bewildered. Just as he was struggling to his feet, a policeman came along, and seeing his bewildered condition, his shoeless feet, and battered appearance, laid his hand roughly on his shoulder, and said to him: "What are you doing here?"

"This is my home. I am Christopher Hembold?" answered he.

The policeman laughed: "Oh, come off! This is the home of the Widow Hembold, all right; but you look about as much like the defunct Christopher as a yellow cur resembles a King Charles spaniel."

Christopher tried to jerk away. "Let me alone!" he cried angrily.

"Will I?" said the burly policeman. "Where are your boots?" continued he.

"In the house, if it is any of your business, was the surly reply.

The tumult within the house still continued; lights were carried from room to room, and flashed weirdly up and down the stairs. Thomas came hurriedly out of the door, kicking Christopher's boots into the street as he ran down the steps.

"Hello!" says the policeman: "What's the matter in there?"

"Some burglar, or lunatic let himself into the

house, and into Mrs. Hembold's room; and she's gone into hysterics; I'm going after Dr. Philbrick."

"Let me go! Let go of me! I'm going into the house—to my wife!" said Christopher, struggling wildly.

"You are going to the station, and if you don't go decently, I'll call the patrol;" and call the patrol he did.

Christopher fought like a fury, but in spite of it he was loaded into the wagon between two burly promoters of the peace and carried to the station, where he raved like a madman all night. The next morning they had him up for drunk and disorderly. In vain he protested that he had not touched liquor, and declared that his name was Christopher Hembold. No one believed him, so he got fifteen days, and the next morning saw him marched out with the chain gang to work on the street. He had quieted down by this time, and had determined what to do; he watched his opportunity until the overseer's back was turned toward him; all the rest of the gang except his mate also faced the opposite way. He slipped a dollar into his mate's willing palm. "You will not see me leave; look the other way." He obeyed, and Christopher hurried down a side street, walked swiftly through a front gate into a private yard, out through a rear gate into an alley, and was lost to the chain gang.

He went direct to his lawyers. Mr. Hurd, the senior member of the firm, was seated at his desk when Christopher entered; he scarcely looked up at his salutation: "Good-morning Mr. Hurd."

The lawyer barely nodded his head, and continued his writing; after several minutes, observing Christopher still standing: "Well, sir! Have you business with me?" evidently not favorably impressed by his visitor's appearance.

"Don't you know me, Mr. Hurd?"

The lawyer looked him over in cynical surprise: "Can't say that I ever saw you before."

"You ought to know Christopher Hembold?" interrogatively.

"Yes, sir; I knew him well; good fellow, but a little cracked in the upper story."

He returned to his writing, evidently considering the matter disposed of; after a long time Christopher, still smarting from Mr. Hurd's contemptuous remark, said: "Well?" in a questioning tone.

Mr. Hurd looked up in displeasure. "Please state your business; my time is limited," he said.

Christopher flushed a sickly green over all his yellow face. "Mr. Hurd, I came to you to have you intercede for me with my wife; she will not allow me to speak to her, and caused the servants to throw me out of the house."

The lawyer held up his hand: "First, if you wish me to take your case, I must receive a retainer; I do business in no other way."

Christopher opened his lashless eyes in a grotesque stare. "Sir! You have all of my business in your hands, and have had it for years," answered he angrily.

Mr. Hurd turned around in his office chair, and gave his caller an angry look; he touched

the button at his side; a colored servant came instantly.

"James, show this man out." Turning to Christopher he said:

"I have no time to be bothered with such nonsense. The idea of your trying to palm yourself off for Christopher Hembold!" he cried, with withering contempt.

Christopher stalked out of the office in a rage. He went direct to his room at the hotel; he threw himself into a chair, and buried his face in his hands; his attitude expressed the utmost dejection; after a time he arose and stood before the mirror:

"Is it possible that Maria did not know me?" he looked at himself scornfully: "Who would know you? You old, yellow-faced, putty baby, you!" he apostrophized, shaking his fist at his reflection. "Serves you right; serves you right, you old idiot! Fool with the 'X' ray, will you, trying to find out if you do know anything? I can tell you that you are a fool. Fool! fool!" he cried tragically.

After a time he calmed down, and taking out his purse counted the contents.

There is something akin to the ridiculous in the near association of pathos and money; they are very near neighbors, however. Christopher sighed deeply: "This is all I have left, and—when my lawyer will not acknowledge my identity, what am I to do?" He drummed impatiently upon the table with his fingers; finally he started up excitedly: "Of course! Good Lord! why didn't I think of that!"

He hauled his gripsack into the middle of the room; shirts and socks flew right and left, until he found the cathodographs, also a photograph taken just previous to his experimenting; he took them out, and placed them in a row; taking the photograph, he walked to the mirror and compared it with the reflection.

"I don't wonder that no one knew you, you old scarecrow, you!" glaring angrily at his double.

The next morning he again sought Mr. Hurd; the lawyer turned angrily upon his entrance: "I do not wish to be bothered, sir," motioning toward the door.

Christopher was not to be put off in this manner; he walked up to the desk, and laid down the pictures he had brought.

"Will you be kind enough to look at these?" asked Christopher in a quivering voice.

Mr. Hurd glanced at them impatiently: "Well! What of them?"

"You know this one as representing Christopher Hembold?" he asked eagerly, with his finger on the photograph spoken of.

"Yes, of course; what of that? it does not resemble you," curtly.

"But I sat for every one of those pictures," despondently; the hope which he had cherished dying within his heart.

"Oh, stuff, nonsense!" scornfully ejaculated Mr. Hurd. Christopher's head fell forward on his breast; he looked the picture of despair. His clothing hung loosely upon his long, gaunt limbs; his hands, much too large for the bony

wrists, dropped nervelessly at his side; his lifeless eyes, his hollow cheeks, looked as though the great Conqueror had already claimed him, while still permitting him to roam the earth for some inscrutable purpose.

Mr. Hurd, having little sentiment, thought only of his annoyance. "Will you please remove that litter from the desk," he said.

Christopher made one more appeal: "Will you write to Professor Blank, and find whether these pictures were taken from my sittings?" he asked supplicatingly.

"I will not be bothered with it, I tell you; write for yourself," he answered roughly.

"I will," said Christopher, with vexed decision, then occurred to him the thought; Professor Blank knew him as Smith only. He gathered the photographs up hastily, and rushed out of the house. "I've a notion to drown my fool self! Oh, what shall I do! Was ever any one in such a predicament!" he cried aloud. Everyone turned to look at him as he ran past them.

"Hello, Smith! Where are you going in such a rush? What is the matter with you?" cried a familiar voice in his very ear.

Christopher gave a great shout; then began to cry like a veritable baby, as he grasped the professor's hands. "I was going to drown myself; you have saved my life," and he fairy blubbered.

"Smith, you are as crazy as you are bald-headed," laughingly said the professor.

"Don't call me *Smith!* My name is Christopher Hembold," he said excitedly.

"I only know that you called yourself Smith."

"Yes; it's surprising what a fool a man can make of himself," dejectedly.

He took the photographs from his pocket, and said entreatingly: "Say, professor, do go with me to my lawyer, and tell him that you took these with the 'X' ray, and *don't* say anything about *Smith;*" this last in a tone of intense disgust.

They were just entering a park, and seated themselves on a bench, while Christopher told the whole story. The professor laughed, even as he said: "I'm sorry for you, and will help you all I can."

Once more Christopher climbed the stairs to the lawyer's office. Mr. Hurd arose to his feet wrathfully. "You are the most persistent annoyance that I ever met——"

Christopher interrupted him: "Mr. Hurd, allow me to introduce to you the eminent Professor Blank."

The lawyer jerked his head slightly, attaching no importance to the name. The Professor bowed courteously, at the same time handing him his card.

As Mr. Hurd glanced at the bit of pasteboard, his manner underwent a great change: "Please be seated," said he urbanely.

Professor Blank bowed again: "This gentleman requested me to accompany him to your office, to testify that I took these cathodographs of him with the 'X' ray. This represents him as he appeared when I first saw him," laying the photograph on the desk: "After having the last

of the cathodographs taken he was very ill for a long time; his hair had nearly all fallen before his illness, and during that illness he became emaciated as you see him."

Mr. Hurd stood gazing from Christopher to the photograph, and back again in amazement.

"But what took his hair off?"

"Oh, the 'X' ray; it sometimes has that effect," said the professor calmly.

Mr. Hurd turned to Christopher: "You don't mean to tell me—" he paused eloquently.

"Yes, I was experimenting with the 'X' ray—having my brain cathodographed," he answered humbly.

Maria had entered unperceived: "You mean that you had your skull pictured; you haven't any brain, Christopher; the 'X' ray makes but a slight shadow of soft substances, and none of a vacuum," said she sweetly.

Said Christopher, in an aside to the professor: "I told you that you didn't know my Maria! My! Won't I catch it, though!"

AN AVERTED TRAGEDY.

Merna Wood stood leaning against the jamb in the open doorway.

The morning-glory vines made a very effective draping for a very pretty picture; the attitude was the acme of indolence, which an indescribable expression of alertness belied.

Ned Glover was standing below, his face just on a level with hers; he was looking at her laughingly—in fact he was nearly always laughing—and Merna was never certain that he meant one-half that he was saying, which at this moment was: "Yes; I am going to buy a nice little home, and I want a housekeeper; will you come?"

Merna tossed her head saucily: "I do not intend to go out to service this summer," she replied.

"If I must do so, I will hire some one to do the work, and have my wife oversee it. Will you come as my wife, Merna?"

Merna flushed rosily, she was not yet sure that he was in earnest, so she replied lightly, "Oh, you are just funning, as the children say."

He tried to draw his face into lines of seriousness, but his bright blue eyes would twinkle, he was so jolly that it was impossible for him to assume an expression of severe gravity.

He caught her face in both his large palms, and kissed her fondly: "Say yes! Say yes, I tell you!" he whispered forcefully.

"Yes! Yes! Let me go, Ned, mother is looking!"

"Well, mother has a perfect right to look; we do not care!" his face one broad laugh.

Ned was from this time—of course—a privileged visitor; always pleasant, and in a manner affectionate, yet no more loverlike than before their engagement. The tender nonsense that helps to make courtship so sweet; the airs of possession on one side, and of loving subjection on the other the happy planning by both for the future, seemed to be entirely forgotten.

Love is a magician who fits the eyes with a deceptive lens; but not even through love's magnifying could Merna find tangible ground for rosy dreams; she was not exactly unhappy, neither was she quite satisfied. She took herself to task for being so foolish— just because of the lack of definite words—but he seemed to have forgotten the engagement altogether, as he made not the slightest allusion to it. It made Merna's face burn whenever she thought of it: "I do wonder if he was just making game of me, trying to ascertain what answer I would give him! Oh, I wish that I had have said no—Oh, I do not know what I do wish!" angry tears filling her eyes as she thought.

Ned came as usual one evening, and remained until very late; once, as she was passing him, she rested her hand upon the table, and leaned toward him in the act of speaking; he covered

the hand with his warm palm, and his breath swept her cheek as he whispered: "I wish that I had you all to myself in a nice little home of our own!"

Her radiant eyes answered him, and she bent her head until her cheek touched his caressing lips.

As he was bidding her good-night, he caught her in his arms, saying over and over again, "I do love you, Merna! You are the sweetest little woman on the face of the earth!"

Her face was filled with happiness, and her eyes glowed with tender light; but she laughingly put her hand over his lips: "I imagine that is what you call 'taffy'!"

He held her closely for a moment, his voice growing low and earnest: "Little one, I mean every word that I say! I do love you—and if only circumstances—well, never mind that talk, but believe that I truly love you!"

She sat in the moonlight thinking for a long time after he left; what was there in that closing speech which sent a chill over her? Only this—love is said to be blind—as to worldly judgment this is true; but love's intuition of love grows keen with the development of the passion. She felt that she ought to be happy, but she was not—that is—not so very happy; little thrilling thoughts ran through her mind deliciously, then a cold wave of doubt, casting a chill over her spirits. A woman is flattered and pleased if a man makes her a sharer of his secrets, whether of business or otherwise; she thus knows that he fully trusts her love and judgment, and she holds

it a sacred charge. She thought uneasily that she could have no fond anticipations with any certainty of their proving a reality. Whatever she built must be the very airiest kind of an air castle, its only foundation an engagement which seemed like a burlesque. Vague allusions, or even words of endearment do not form a very tangible ground upon which to build.

A restless sigh escaped her lips: "I wish——" The unfinished sentence ended with another sigh.

The next evening she waited for Ned in a state of impatient restlessness, she had determined to have a nice long talk with him, although she was not in anywise certain as to what she would say; she thought she would lead him to talk of the future, and the home of which he had spoken; she wondered if he would talk of it frankly, or would he evade her questions as he so often had done, as though he did not comprehend her remark.

She watched the clock anxiously; she walked down the path to the gate a dozen times; she took up her embroidery, set a half-dozen stitches, and laid it down in disgust; she took a book instead, turned a page or two without comprehending a word and tossed it aside with an exclamation of impatience, to restlessly drum on the window.

"Merna, what ails you?" asked her mother querulously.

"Oh, my head aches," was the evasive reply.

"You had best go to bed; you make me nervous, fidgeting around so!"

"It is too early to go to bed! I'll go out in the air a little while—perhaps that will help my head," answered Merna.

"Merna Wood, you have been down to that gate about a dozen times; why don't you be honest, and say that you are looking for Ned!" half in derision, and a trifle crossly, retorted her mother.

Merna answered with mock humility: "Yes'm, I'll confess, if you will not be cross. Oh, Mamsy, I wish he would come; there is something I wish to say to him!" she kneeled down with her head on her mother's knee, like a little child.

Her mother replied laughingly: "It appears to me that you do usually have something to say to him," but her hand wandered caressingly through the soft, bright hair; thus evidencing her sympathy.

He did not come that night nor the next, and for three almost unending months Merna neither heard from nor of him; then incidentally, she heard that he was gone, but where her informant did not know.

Gone without so much as a word to her!

She shut her grief within her heart and went about her duties but with the subtle essence of hope and faith taken out of her life—she thought forever—she had little idea how elastic is hope; faith is more ethereal, hope has tough fibre.

When her mother would have sympathized with her, she made light of it: "I don't care! If he wants to stay away, he can; don't you fret about me, mamsy!" But mamsy was not in the least deceived.

A year swept by, and Merna had become less restless, more submissive to that which she deemed the inevitable; it is a mercy that time casts so tender a haze over all things.

Ned had written no letter to her; at first she grieved, but latterly she had grown indignant.

"Why do you not accept other company?" said her mother.

"Oh, I don't care for them; they are not nice, mamsy."

"You are a very foolish little girl to waste your affections upon one who cares so little," said her mother.

"Now, mamsy, I am not wasting a particle of anything. As for Ned Glover, I hate him!"

Her mother laughed, but said no more, trusting to time to effect a cure.

. . . . . .

It was a lovely evening in June; the wind softly fluttered the thin curtains at the open window bringing in the odor of the roses which grew just outside. Merna sat in a low rocker just within, her arms thrown above her head, her book lying unheeded upon her lap; she was so absorbed in reverie that she heard no sound, and a sudden darkening of the window startled her.

Resting his arms on the window ledge, Ned stood regarding her quizzically: "Are you too sleepy to say 'how do you do?' How I do wish for a kodak!" precisely as though he had not been gone a day.

Merna started up with a subdued exclamation, and before she realized it she was smiling up into his laughing face.

How often she had thought of this meeting—*if* he should return—and pictured to herself the cool, indifferent air with which she would greet him; instead, she was laughing and chatting as merrily as though there had been no break in their intercourse.

He resumed precisely his former position; he made just the same vague, intangible allusions, without one word upon which to place a hope securely. Merna seemed plastic in his hands—and what was there to resist, or to resent? Nothing—perhaps; yet Merna lost her healthful calm, and grew restless and irritable; one cannot successfully resist the intangible, or do battle with the wind. His alternate tenderness, and good-natured indifference filled her with restless longing; she wished that he would be more explicit, or go away and leave her alone; she thought resentfully that it was unjust that because of her sex she must utter no word to further her own happiness; and because custom ordered it, she must take the crumbs offered to her, or go altogether hungry; she must have no voice in shaping her future beyond an assent or denial. Oh, yes; to be sure! There are a thousand ways in which a woman may signify her preference, but it would be very shocking if she should put it into words, unless the man asked her to do so! It looks for all the world like putting a premium upon intrigue.

Her girlish friends exchanging confidences, rallied her about her beau: "Oh, Merna, when are you going to be married?"

"Just as soon as I can find a man who will

marry me," retorted she, but she flushed painfully.

"Oh don't cheat! Tell us all about it!"

"There is nothing to tell," replied Merna looking distressed.

A wild chorus of dissent greeted this reply; as soon as possible Merna slipped away to cry out her grief and mortification. She thought that everyone of them was laughing at her because of her uncertainty regarding her lover.

Ned certainly had no such feelings; he took everything for granted in a laughing, off-hand way, not to be resisted; he came continually, he monopolized her completely; he spoke to her, and of her as belonging to him, but always in that laughing way which left the impression of a joke; he did not say, such a day we will be married; such a place will be our home; he said instead: "You belong to me; you could not get away from me if you tried; I should find you, I shall always know where you are."

This was all very sweet, but—very unsatisfying. He was strong, masterful, laughingly dominant; but he was also either very thoughtless, or very secretive.

He made no allusion to the time of his absence except once; he had that evening been unusually demonstrative, and Merna—from some remark made by him—felt emboldened to ask: "Where were you while so long absent?"

"Oh, a dozen places. I can't tell you—things get so mixed up sometimes that I don't know what I'm about myself," he replied evasively.

"You might have written," said Merna quietly, it almost seemed indifferently.

"Yes, I know—in fact I meant to, but—I hate to write letters, and there was nothing that you would care to know—" he broke off abruptly, as though he did not wish to betray himself.

"No, of course not," answered Merna, with quiet sarcasm; she felt hurt and indignant, but was altogether too proud to show it.

Although Merna made no further mention of it, he seemed to feel ashamed of his neglect, and repeatedly said: "I will never leave again, without telling you that I am going;" so that in this respect she felt a greater assurance; but he spent the evening with her as usual, and in the usual manner bid her good-night, and she saw him no more for three years.

Sad changes came to Merna during this interval; her mother, long a widow, sickened and died. Merna's grief was beyond words—beyond thought even; it benumbed all her senses. The home which she had thought her own was taken from her—unjustly—but what did that matter? She was alone, and as ignorant of law as a babe. Poor child! She thought that it did not matter, that nothing mattered, now that the gentle face of her mother had faded out of life; she felt that she could no longer live within those memory-haunted walls. During all these sad days she heard nothing from Ned, and her heart cried out piteously: "Oh, if he truly loved me he would not leave me to bear my burdens alone." These hard realities took away all the lingering grace of girlhood, but added the charm and poise of sweet, self-reliant womanhood.

In these old towns, where people are born,

live, and die in the same old house, generation after generation; where the ways are peaceful and narrow; where people drift along, content with no innovations of knowledge, or new ways brought from the bustling, outside world, there develops an aristocracy peculiarly its own, and those not within its old-fashioned circle can scarcely obtain a living. Not to own the home which their ancestors owned is looked upon as a disgrace; and owning it, to part with it, though the misfortune is not through fault of the owner —is considered a greater disgrace, for which there could be no extenuation. Merna very keenly realized that she was under the ban of social ostracism. She left this, her native place, for a town, newer and busier, where work was to be had for such unskilled hands as hers.

Being wholly inexperienced in the ways of the world, as well as in labor, Merna found it hard to obtain the means of subsistence; she was a woman fair to look upon, and alone, therefore her path was beset with peril; but she was able to retain her own self-respect—that most truthful of all commendation—she was possessed of too much native refinement to be led into the vulgarity of evil ways, or seduced from right by fluent sophistries.

. . . . . .

One blustering day, when the wind shrieked around the street corners, and carried onward clouds of fine, penetrating dust, intermingled with the falling snow, whirling both into every opened doorway with malicious violence, a man wrapped in a great, shaggy overcoat, opened the

door of the little store kept by Merna. There had been no customers all the morning; unless otherwise compelled, all were glad to remain within doors.

Merna came from the sitting room in the rear, and walked behind the counter awaiting her customer's pleasure; with his back toward her, he had taken off his fur cap, and was knocking out the snow against the door. Something familiar in the movements and attitude gave her a start, but it was not until he had unbuttoned his coat, and turned toward her, that she really recognized him; he walked to the counter, reaching out both hands, his blond face one broad smile. It was Ned—stalwart, hearty, and as usual—laughing.

Merna stood like one shocked, a terrible weakness assailed her; she saw the laughing face but dimly, his voice sounded strange and far off.

His robust tones aroused her: "Aren't you going to shake hands with me, after I have had such a time finding you?" he asked.

"Why did you seek me?" cried Merna passionately, surprised out of her usual self-control.

"Because I wanted to see you, to be sure!" The same laughing insousiance as of old, so impossible to understand; it might be pleasant railery, it was quite as likely to be sarcasm.

"I wish that you had stayed away—after three years!" her voice rising shrilly.

He walked deliberately around the end of the counter, caught both her hands and held them firmly, his warm breath sweeping her cheek his face so very near her own. "Did I not tell you

that I should find you? I shall never lose sight of you!" his face still lower, his lips touching her cheek caressingly. "I am so glad to see you, my Merna! Say, 'Ned I am glad that you are here!' " he whispered tenderly.

Ah, well! A woman's a woman! and poor girl, her heart throbbed so happily; it seemed so good to have this great strong man holding her hands, whispering to her in this tender tone; what if the words did not promise much, the tone conveyed a world of tender meaning, and—she was so lonely. She had been so fiercely angry at him that she thought she hated him; she found that it was the act that she hated, and not the man; he held his old place in her heart. Presently she was shedding happy tears on his broad shoulder, and looking happily up into his face through her wet lashes; thrilling from her foolish little heart to the ends of her fingers with the delight of his very presence.

From this time on how different the dull, prosaic work seemed; the anticipation of the happy evening glorified each day, and he never failed to come. He appeared to be perfectly content in her company; he called her fond names, and usurped all the privileges of an accepted lover. He occasionally alluded to business, sometimes ending with, "When I get things into shape, I'll pick you up and carry you off."

Often Merna felt hurt, the allusions were so vague and really unmeaning, and the talk of business so indefinite—the sentences never quite complete—so that she had no certain knowledge

as to what was his business. A half-confidence is much more vexatious than no confidence as it puts one to thinking; this was really no trust at all in her; just an aggravating shadow, like a cloud over the summer sun, which when you look upward in expectation of its grateful shade has sailed away.

A whole year passed away, and living in the light of his presence, her uneasy feeling had mostly worn away; if she gave it thought—that in reality she knew no more of the future than when he first returned, she consoled herself, and excused him, by saying, "Oh, he is so odd, but he means all right."

As upon previous occasions there came an evening when she waited for him in vain; she could not settle herself to anything, even the chatter of her customers annoyed her, and her ear persistently hearkened for a well-known footstep; something must have detained him unavoidably; he would surely come to-morrow evening, but all the while her heart was sinking heavily. He did not come the next evening, nor the one following, and her fear grew to a certainty. She mentioned his name to no one, but watched the passers-by on the street, feverishly; she eagerly looked over the newspapers, hoping for a chance mention of him. The days seemed so long and wearisome; the corners of her mouth took a sad droop; the work grew so irksome. Others sought her company, but she turned from them with dislike, or made comparisons to their great detriment.

Business had heretofore been very good, but

hard times came on, and little by little trade dropped off; it grew dull, then vexatious and finally exasperating; complaints were heard on every side. The days grew doubly sad when no customers came in to break the heavy monotony; the very silence grew oppressive, and Merna could scarcely restrain her tears. Her heart grew hard and bitter toward Ned, toward the world, and fate.

The wind whistled shrilly around the loosely built building, rattling the boards and battens, and swaying the canvas walls and ceiling dizzily, making Merna feel more desolate and despondent than usual. She stood behind the cigar case, looking gloomily out upon the wind-swept street; as if conjured up by her thought, Martin Balfour—her chief creditor—entered the store.

He came in with a great swagger, and called for a cigar: "Gi'mme a good one—twenty-five cent-er; I reckon I can afford it!" with an insolent leer.

Without reply, she handed him the box, to make his own choice.

He selected one, lighted it, and leaning lazily against the show case, puffed the smoke in huge volumes; he finally took the weed from his lips, ejected a mouthful of saliva on to the clean floor, flicked the ashes off with his little finger, and said, "Well, Miss Wood, I s'pose you are ready to chalk up this morning?"

Merna flushed a vivid red, then went deadly pale; this man held a mortgage on everything she possessed, and his manner was distinctly aggressive. "I could not get the money this

morning, Mr. Balfour; I have the promise of it the latter end of the week, and I beg of you to wait," faltered Merna.

He laughed loudly and coarsely: "As to waiting, I've waited just as long as I am going to; my kindness is all right, but I'm no guy, see! Your chump of a fellow left you to shift for yourself; I'm not one to drag up bygones—I'll marry you, and call the debt square!" He leaned across the showcase, and tried to grasp her hand.

Merna drew herself up indignantly: "I thank you, but I prefer paying my debts in a legitimate way."

"Well, fork over, then," he said brutally.

Tears filled her eyes, she had not one-tenth the amount, so she tried to temporize: "I will certainly raise it by the middle of the week——"

"The mortgage is due; it's got to be paid today! I'm going to take no more guff—either you promise to marry me, or I'll take the stock before night, see!" Protruding his face toward her still more aggressively.

Merna grew calm as he became excited; she thought of Ned with a pang of bitterness, that he could place her in a position to be insulted upon his account by such a man; but her disgust of the man himself outweighed all else. "Take the goods now; I shall make no more effort!" she said coldly.

"You'll be sorry! You'll come whining to me when you're starving," he flung after her angrily, as he went out.

Within an hour the place was stripped of everything; Merna stood with folded arms and

saw them taken out without a tear, she seemed benumbed.

An acquaintance passing, came in: "What is the trouble, Miss Wood? Are you obliged to give up?" he asked kindly.

"Yes," briefly.

He looked at her sorrowful face, and his heart filled with pity for her. He laid his hand over her's, and said kindly: "I wish that you would give me the privilege of caring for you——"

Merna put out her hand as though to shield herself: "Wait! Wait! I cannot answer you now; come back this evening; my heart is too full now to think—I thank you—" she finished brokenly.

He lifted her hand to his lips respectfully, as he replied, "I will come," and went out quietly.

Merna felt a hysterical desire to laugh; two proposals in one morning, and not an earthly thing which she could call her own; she thought grimly that she could not accuse either of them of being fortune hunters. Everything had been taken except a small sheet-iron stove, an old chair, and a rickety table, these had not been considered worth removing. She sat down in the chair, and laid her head on her arms on the table; she wished that she could cry, her heart beat so heavily; a wild anguish swept over her as she thought of her mother; she would not have deserted her in her hour of need; she cried aloud as a thought of Ned forced itself upon her consciousness: "Why cling to the shadow of a love, which only tantalizes me; he had no real love for me! I was just a good comrade—and a fool!" she added bitterly.

Presently she resumed her self-communing: "Why not accept this last proposal? Tom Thornton is a good man, and he loves me; better one who loves me so well, than waste my life upon a shadow which ever eludes my grasp;" the well-remembered look of Ned's jolly face—though she was so sad—made her smile, then sigh restlessly.

With her head resting upon the table she dropped off into wearied slumber, from whence she entered dreamland. Strange, troubled visions passed her, out of which evolved Tom Thornton's face, she heard him enter, and he stood beside her, her affianced husband; he sought to take her hand, but she turned from him with aversion, reaching out both hands to Ned, who approached her, stern and menacing.

"I can-not! I can-not!" she cried piteously.

"What is it, that you cannot do?" said a hearty voice in her ear.

"Marry Tom Thornton!" raising her woe-begone, haggard face.

"I should think not! You are going to marry me this very night! I've got everything fixed—a nice home, and all," he finished exultantly, but as usual, indefinitely.

Merna was very wide awake now, and cried out, bitterly, "Why did you come back? Why don't you stay away when you go?" the only thought presented to her mind being that he would stay until her whole hopes were fixed upon him, then he would again leave.

"Why did I come? After you, of course! Little woman, I depended upon you, you prom-

ised me, you know!" his voice trembling with an undefined fear.

"Yes, I remember that I promised, but you seem to have forgotten, ever since that you asked me for that promise!" indignantly.

His good-looking face sobered into amazement: "Merna! I only wished to keep all the worry away from you. I thought that you would not understand, and if I told you it would make you anxious!" a deep trouble in his voice.

Merna stood up, her hands on his shoulders: "Oh, Ned, Ned! Do you think that I am a baby—that I haven't a grain of sense? A woman thinks that the man she loves is able to accomplish all things—if only he tells her all about it," she finished with a gleeful laugh.

He stood looking at her in bewilderment, trying to get the whole meaning of that speech into his mind; at last he caught her, giving her an extravagant hug: "I see what you mean; you want me to understand that we are to be partners in all things; the business as well as the pleasure —the sorrow as well as the joys; I never had a little 'pard' before, and I think I did not catch on just right; but I'll remember my lesson," said he, laughing happily.

The door stood slightly ajar, as Ned had left it upon entering, and Tom Thornton stepped quietly within; he paused and smiled; then sighed as he silently went out. He was answered.

THE END.

Remarks by Bill Nye.

THE FUNNIEST OF BOOKS.

"It will cure the blues quicker than the doctor and at half the price."—*New York Herald*

Over 500 Pages.
Fully Illustrated.

Cloth, $1.50; Paper, 50c.

LAUGH AND GROW FAT.

A collection of the best writings of this great author, most profusely illustrated, with over 500 pages. It is the funniest of books. Bill Nye needs no introduction. The mention of the book is enough.

"I have passed through an earthquake and an Indian outbreak, but I would rather ride an earthquake without saddle or bridle, than to bestride a successful broncho eruption."—*Bill Nye.*

"Age brings caution and a lot of shop-worn experience, purchased at the highest market price. Time brings vain regrets and wisdom teeth that can be left in a glass of water over night."—*Bill Nye.*

SPARKS FROM THE PEN OF BILL NYE. 192 PAGES. PAPER, 25c.

WIT AND HUMOR. BY NYE AND RILEY. PAPER, 25c.

For sale everywhere, or sent post-paid on receipt of price.

F. TENNYSON NEELY, Publisher.

96 Queen Street, London. 114 Fifth Avenue, New York.

Kerchiefs to Hunt Souls.

By M. AMELIA FYTCHE.

Neely's Popular Library.

Paper, 25c.

Of late years writers have found it necessary to attract the eye of the passing public toward their work by giving it some striking title. Unfortunately in many instances these remarkable names serve only that purpose, and have little or no application for the story. This can hardly be said of Miss Fytche's new book, "Kerchiefs to Hunt Souls." If for no other reason, this book should certainly arouse considerable curiosity on account of the remarkable title, which the author has, she confesses, dug out of the Bible, in order to stamp the peculiar features of her story. It is a book well worth reading, and one we cordially recommend to all who enjoy a good story when based upon those great morals that govern the world. There is a promise of even better things to come from this talented writer. 'Kerchiefs to Hunt Souls" has aroused considerable newspaper controversy from Maine to California, which fact is in itself enough to stamp the book one of more than ordinary ability, since space is too valuable to be wasted on trash in the estimation of the modern editor.

For sale everywhere, or sent post-paid on receipt of price.

F. TENNYSON NEELY, Publisher,

96 Queen Street, London. 114 Fifth Avenue, New York.

Novels of Willis Steell.

In A MOUNTAIN OF GOLD the reader is led through many strange adventures, while a vein of love arouses the interest of the fair sex. Mr. Steell has shown more than ordinary power in describing Western scenes. For many years to come the region from the Rockies to the Pacific must be the home of romance. The century before us is destined to be marked by stupendous discoveries in the treasures of the earth, and stories of mining must always commend themselves to the eager public.

ISIDRA, THE PATRIOT DAUGHTER OF MEXICO. The land of the Montezumas has always been invested with a halo of romance ever since the days when the Spanish invader, Cortez, swept over the country with his conquering army of treasure seekers. This interest, instead of waning as the years pass by, rather increases. New knowledge of Mexico but whets our eagerness to learn more of her strange people, their methods of living, and the vast treasures that lie sealed under her mountain ledges. "Isidra" is written by one who is thoroughly at home in his subject. It is a charming tale of love and adventure under the Mexican flag, and one cannot read the romance without learning many interesting things in connection with our neighbors over the border.

ISIDRA. Paper, 50 cents.

A MOUNTAIN OF GOLD. Paper, 25 cents.

For sale everywhere, or sent post-paid on receipt of price.

F. TENNYSON NEELY, Publisher,

96 Queen Street, London. 114 Fifth Avenue, New York.

EVEN AS YOU AND I

By

BOLTON HALL.

Author of "Who Pays Your Taxes?" "Equitable Taxation," "Stories for Little Citizens," Etc.

Neely's Prismatic Library, Cloth, Gilt Top, 50 cents.

HE circulation of this book will probably depend upon the number of men and women who are in search of a religion; not of a new religion, but of the oldest religion, made applicable and applied to personal, social and political life. The second part of the book is prefaced by a letter of Tolstoy's to the author, endorsing his view of life.

The allegories which form the first part show how in ordinary life, as Oliver Shreiner puts it, greatness is to take the common things of life and to walk truly among them; happiness is a great love and much serving; holiness is an infinite compassion for others.

There is an introduction by Ernest Howard Crosby, which is a complete sketch in itself.

For sale everywhere, or sent post-paid on receipt of price.

F. TENNYSON NEELY, Publisher,

96 Queen Street, London. 114 Fifth Avenue, New York.

Through Field and Fallow.

A Choice Collection of Original Poems.

By JEAN HOOPER PAGE.

CLOTH, GILT TOP, $1.00.

IT IS NOT always the brilliant work which appeals to us most keenly. Sarcasm and rhetoric have their place, but the book that lies on the desk and is found in the mending-basket is the book, nine times out of ten, that deals with every-day life and sweeps across the strings of the heart. While Mrs. Page's work, "Through Field and Fallow," often touches the subtle minor chords, it invariably swells to the triumphant major and rings clear and true in the sweetness of undying hope and unquenchable faith.

Much of Mrs. Page's work has appeared first in our great daily newspapers, but its life has been less ephemeral than theirs. Here and there a woman has treasured some bit in her scrap book; a man has clipped a verse and put it away in the drawer of his desk marked "private." Sooner or later in this little volume the reader will find the poem that was written for him.

Father Ryan once wrote: "To uplift the downcast, to sweeten any life, to feel that we in some way have helped to lighten the great burden that rests upon mankind—this is the only real compensation that comes to the poet." This recompense will be Mrs. Page's.

For sale everywhere, or sent post-paid on receipt of price.

F. TENNYSON NEELY, Publisher,

Queen Street, London. 114 Fifth Avenue, New York.

Neely's Imperial Library.

POPULAR AUTHORS,
BEST TITLES, FINEST BOOKS.

Illuminated Paper Covers and many Illustrations.

Entered as Second-Class Matter.

PRICE, 25 CENTS.

The Charlatan. Robert Buchanan and Henry Murray.
Burkett's Lock. M. G. McClelland.
The Land of Promise. (Illustrated.) Paul Bourget.
Hypnotism. (Illustrated.) Jules Claretie.
Facing the Flag. Jules Verne.
The Fallen Race. (Illustrated.) Austyn Granville.
The Disappearance of Mr. Derwent. Thomas Cobb.
Sacrificed Love. (Illustrated.) Alphonse Daudet.
The One Too Many. Mrs. E. Lynn Lynton.
The New Man at Rossmere. Mrs. J. H. Walworth.
At Market Value. Grant Allen.
A Daughter of the King. Allen.
A Monk of Cruta. (Illustrated.) E. Phillips Oppenheim.
The Gates of Dawn. Fergus Hume.
In Strange Company. (Illustrated.) Guy Boothby
How Women Love. Max Nordau.
The Comedy of Sentiment. Max Nordau.

NEW TITLES WILL BE ADDED RAPIDLY.

For sale everywhere, or sent postpaid on receipt of price.

F. TENNYSON NEELY, Publisher,

96 Queen St., London. 114 Fifth Ave., New York.

THE KING IN YELLOW.

By

Robert W. Chambers.

Author of "In the Quarter."

Neely's Prismatic Library.

Gilt Top, 50 Cents.

This book has evidently created an astonishing amount of enthusiasm among the lovers of the weird and eccentric in literature. On all sides nothing but praise has been heard, coupling the gifted author's name with that of Edgar Allan Poe, and predicting a glorious future for the man whose pen has the magical power to charm the reading public, ever eager to seize on that which borders upon the *bizarre*. The odd and attractive cover appeals to the curiosity of the reader, and once he has dipped into the contents he finds a feast spread before him that awakens a desire for further intercourse with the same fertile pen.

EDWARD ELLIS:—"The author is a genius without a living equal, so far as I am aware, in his peculiar field. It is a masterpiece. . . . I have read many portions several times, captivated by the unapproachable tints of the painting. None but a genius of the highest order could do such work."

N. Y. COMMERCIAL ADVERTISER:—"The short prose tale should be a synthesis; it was the art of Edgar Poe, it is the art of Mr. Chambers. . . . His is beyond question a glorious heritage. . . . I fancy the book will create a sensation; . . . in any case it is the most notable contribution to literature which has come from an American publisher for many years; and fine as the accomplishment is, 'The King in Yellow' is large in promise. One has a right to expect a great deal from an author of this calibre."

TIMES HERALD:—"The most eccentric little volume of its (little) day 'The King in Yellow' is subtly fascinating, and compels attention for its style, and its wealth of strange, imaginative force."

NEW YORK TIMES:—"Mr. Robert W. Chambers does not have a system to work up to; he has no fad, save a tendency to write about the marvelous and the impossible; painting pictures of romance that have a wild inspiration about them. Descriptive powers of no mean quality are perceptible in this volume of stories."

THE N. Y. WORLD:—"Mr. Chambers has a great command of words; he is a good painter. His situations are most delicately touched, and some of his descriptions are exquisite. He writes like an artist. He uses colors rather than ideas. . . . The best drama in the volume means madness. The tenderest fancy is a sad mirage. . . . 'The King in Yellow' is a very interesting contribution to the present fund of materio-mysticism. . . . To read Mr. Chambers' little book is to escape from the actual on poetical wings."

MINNEAPOLIS TRIBUNE:—"They have a mysterious eerie air about them that is apt to stimulate the reader's curiosity."

PHILADELPHIA TIMES:—"Charming, delicate, skilful, vivid."

PHILADELPHIA ITEM:—"Expected to make a sensation, charming, full of color and delicately tinted."

CLEVELAND GAZETTE:—"It is wondrous strong dramatic, full of color, weird, uncanny, picturesque, and yet a gem of exquisite coloring, dreamy, symbolic, exciting."

For sale everywhere, or sent post-paid on receipt of price.

F. TENNYSON NEELY, Publisher,

96 Queen Street, London. 114 Fifth Avenue, New York.

PAOLA CORLETII,

THE FAIR ITALIAN.

By ALICE HOWARD HILTON,

Author of "A Blonde Creole."

Neely's Popular Library, paper 25c.

This is a charming romance of life in Italy and New Orleans—of a pretty Italian maid, daughter of a Neapolitan nobleman, who elopes with the lover of her choice, a poor musician, and being hounded by the emissaries of a disappointed suitor, in conjunction with her angry father, they start for America, settling in the famous French Quarter of New Orleans.

The story is sweet and pure, and full of exceeding pathos—the descriptive bits of old New Orleans, with its Jackson Square and St. Louis Cathedral, opposite, are clever pictures of the Creole City of the past. Since Cable has ceased his admirable novels of these interesting people, the public will undoubtedly welcome an addition to Creole literature from the pen of one so thoroughly conversant with the subject as Mrs. Hilton.

For sale everywhere, or sent post-paid on receipt of price.

F. TENNYSON NEELY, Publisher,

96 Queen Street, London. 114 Fifth Avenue, New York.

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
A 000 046 747 2